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[A STRANGE RESOLVE.]

HE LOVES ME: HE LOVES ME NOT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Maurice Durant," "Fickle Fortune," "The Gipsy Peer," etc., etc.

CHAPTER I.

The cold in clime are cold in blood,
Their love can scarce deserve the name;
But mine was like the lava flood
That boils in Etna's breast of flame.

Sweet is revenge, especially to women. *Byron.*

Is it well to commence this faithful chronicle of events, strange, and, serious, and oftentimes mirthful, with a scene of pain and sorrow? The story must be told: let us tell it briefly.

The Countess of Ellsmere lay dying. Ellsmere Castle was hushed from dungeon cellar to the castellated terrace.

Servants glided to and fro in the dim twilight of the autumn evening with slow and subdued steps.

The great saloon—through which kings had paced with regal tread—was closed and darkened. The banquet-hall, which had in the olden times, now gone for ever, rung with loyal toast and jovial drinking song, was as silent as the tomb.

In one of the great bedchambers only was there a light, and that so dim and shaded that it served but to render the gloominess of the vast apartment only more apparent, and to cast the shadows of the great bed and huge furniture of black oak upon the tapestried walls like restless ghost-giants.

On the bed lay the countess. The face was not old, was handsome still, but to its wanness there was added a calm look of care, weariness, and unrest which told more than mere age could have done how near death had been to the frail, feeble frame for years past.

Near the bed, and half-kneeling, was the figure of a young girl. Her shadow danced with the rest upon the tapestry, and mingled with the grotesque

reflection of bed and furniture in the great yawning mirror at the end of the room.

Seen there, enwrapped and surrounded by the shadows and the reflections, one might by a stretch of fancy have imagined her a heroine of the German story who was lost in the wood of shadows, and charmed and held prisoner by a band of ghosts.

The young girl, seen by the dim light, was tall, graceful and handsome.

As she turned her head, allowing the young face to rest for a moment in the gleam of light, one could see that it was a beautiful and a remarkable face, of clear outline, of dark complexion, of masterful and determined cast, notwithstanding the slight softening of tenderness in the face of the soft, curved lips, and the gleam of the large, dark, and heavily lashed eyes. It was a face to set poets thinking and artists painting.

The hands—one of which lies clasped in the thin fingers of the countess—are as remarkable as the face.

They are small, exquisitely white, but firm, and with a peculiar look of strength.

That same expression of self-reliance, of purpose, of composure, is noticeable also in the lithe pose of the body and the droop of the graceful neck. Certainly a wonderful face, and one full of promise of thoughts and deeds beyond her kind.

Looking at it, one would say that a girl with such features would love deeply, hate hotly, and cleave to a purpose or an object with the tenacity of a tiger to its prey.

The girl is the Lady Florice, only child of the woman lying dying in the gloomy, ghost-haunted bedchamber of Ellsmere Castle.

The tarnished silver clock on the high carved mantel ticks through a quarter of an hour as it ticks through many others, and the countess lies motionless, with her thin fingers clasping the white, firm hand of the young girl.

Suddenly, as the figure of Time chimes out the quarter to seven with a stroke of his scythe, the fingers flutter—the countess speaks.

"Florice, are you there?"

"Yes, mother," answers the girl, "I am here. I am always here. I will never leave you."

The voice is very low but very sweet, and as clear as the chimes which have just sounded.

"Raise me, Florice."

The girl rises, showing her tall, lithe figure at its height, and with her strong, graceful arms raises the slight, feeble woman to a half-sitting position.

"Thanks," says the countess, feebly. "Florice."

"I have something to say to you. Are we alone?"

"Yes, my lady," answers the girl, glancing with something like a frown round the room of shadows.

"Quite alone?" continues the countess. "How still the night is! It cannot be stiller in the vault in which I shall sleep soon!"

"Mother," says the Lady Florice, "do not speak so. Let me summon the physician."

"No," says the countess, in her low but firm voice, and with a slow raising of the hand, "no. Stay awhile, Florice, and hear me. Do not think I am sorry to die. I have been waiting for death for years. I have seen him flitting through the hall, have heard him climbing the stairs for weeks past. Florice, I shall die to-night, and, knowing it as I do, I cannot put off longer what I have put off already too long."

"Mother," murmurs the girl, "lie still and sleep. Poor darling, you want rest."

And she soothes the thin, restless hand.

"Rest? I shall get it to-night, Florice. Girl, you have been very good to me. You have shown more tenderness to me to-night than I have shown to you through all your life. I have never loved you, Florice, and you know it!"

The girl's face pales proudly, a tear forms in her eye and drops upon the coverlid, but her voice falters not as she replies, softly:

"I have never complained. Do not let us think of it now."

"I must think and speak of it," says the countess looking down upon her with lack-lustre eyes, which seem to see through and beyond her into the dis-

past. "I must speak of it; I must tell you all. I never loved your father, and he knew it. I married him for pique—I married him to spite the man whom I loved with all my heart and soul; whom I now hate with all that still remains to me of life. Florio, look in yonder mirror. I had a face more beautiful than yours, I had a youth more strong, more full of passion—for I had known life—than yours, and I gave that beauty, that passion to a man who took it, cast it aside, and, while he swore that he loved me only, was but making me the stepping-stone to his own fortune and bestowing his love elsewhere. Florio, I was rich and alone, as you—Heaven help you!—will soon be. This lover of mine was poor and false. Blessed—or cursed—with a beauty like unto the angels, he sought me and, with vows false as dicer's oaths, won my young, warm heart. Some there were who warned me that he loved me for my money alone; but I trusted where I loved, and life to me seemed worthless unless he were mine.

"One day, at Venice, where I lived, the Earl of Ellsmere, whom I had refused for the other, came to me and swore that he could prove him false to me and honour. I swore that should your father so prove him I would cast him off and bear the Ellsmere coronet. Your father took me one night to a masked ball. We hid behind a pillar and watched the dancers. Two separated from the throng and came near us to rest. The one I knew—it was the man to whom I had given all my life, my love, my hope. The other was a woman—small, fair and serpent-like. I saw the glitter of her golden hair now, and the gleam of it flitted on the wall and troubles me even in the hour of death.

"The earl pointed and drew me near them. I stood beside a curtain and heard all. All! All his soft-toned voice of love and his mockings at me and my trustfulness, all his base, his selfish profligacy. As I heard, Florio, I vowed with a fearful oath that I would be revenged in life and death—that I would have no purpose, no object, no aim in life save vengeance. I vowed that should I fail I would tell my children this story of my blighted life, and ending a promise from them to take my vow within their hearts; and then I turned and hid my head in the earl's.

"He smiled—you know your father's hand, still smile, Florio—and waited my command. I snatched the knife from his girdle and cut the strings of the woman's mask.

"It fell and showed a face more diabolical than mine, but false as his. He, the angel, the ruin of my life, started to his feet and seized my arm. I shook him off—I had the strength of seven devils in me then—and made a sign which he had taught me. It was a Corsican vendetta sign and he had learned it in Corsica. It meant vengeance sooner or later, vengeance dire and terrible. He laughed, but he quailed as he laughed, and I saw his head droop as he led his true love away and left me, ashamed, betrayed, deceived and heartbroken, upon the earl's arm.

"I kept my promise: I wore the Ellsmere coronet. Your father loved me at first, Florio, let me say that; but his love waned, died away, perished, beneath my constant coldness and neglect. He died, and left me without a tear for him. I could not weep after that night, Florio! I had lost the power to love. Hate, wild, despairful, had absorbed my whole nature. My whole life was taken up in the unrelenting for revenge.

"The man I loved had married the fair woman I had seen, and had lived through poverty to wealth; but through all the changes my curse clung to him. The dissatisfaction and unrest which ever dwelt in my heart were reflected in his. He could be at peace nowhere; he wandered from land to land, from climate to climate, fading daily as I faded, wasting away from a wasted, wrecked life.

"I met him once, in Venice, where I had first seen and learned to love him. When we met his lip curled to a smile of hate and scorn; but his face paled to deathliness as I made the sign. The vengeance was not wreaked; but he knew that it must come on him or his. He drew a child, a boy—dark, not fair like her—to his side and seemed to want to hide him from me. Did he know? did he foresee this hour, this last hour of mine, when I pass the vow to you—to you, Florio—and bid you bear it? Florio, you are listening?"

The girl's upturned, white and strangely set face was answer enough.

"Florio, remember my blighted life! Remember that through all the years since you have known my face you have never seen a smile on it! Remember my crushed heart! Remember that a man stole your mother's love from you—stole your mother's heart, and filled the void with gall! Remember he, or his, still lives, and that the vow I took to revenge the wrong he did me is still unaccomplished, still unredeemed! Remember this, and vow to me, Florio—here as I die—that you will know no rest till the

vengeance is complete, until you have wreaked on him or his the punishment of his sin!"

The thin, hot fingers clasped the pure, cold hand in a grasp of steel, the voice grew thinner and huskier, the eyes a while since lit up by the fire of hate and lust of vengeance paled and waned; the Angel of Death glided towards the bed.

"Mother," said the girl, with strained voice and eyes, "would you deem me to such a life-quest? Would you fix the curse on me?"

"Ay!" shrieked the dying woman. "You are young, you have strength of body and will to hunt him down and revenge me on him or his! Is a wasted, crushed life nothing to you? I tell you, girl, that it is worse than death to have loved and been betrayed and left to live. Had he slain me where I stood I could have forgiven him; but he left me to live with the memory of his laughter in my ears and her smile of triumph in my eyes! Am I to die after all these years of bitterness and restless horror unrevenged? Is he and his to live and laugh on? No! Swear, girl; I command you! Swear, as you are a child of mine!"

"Mother," cried the girl, "what can I do? What shall I do? I am alone, helpless, guideless,—"

"Swear!" gasped the dying woman, with her hand pointing upwards. "Swear, if you would not have a mother's curse, to know no rest, no love, till you have revenged the blighted life of the mother who gave you birth."

The girl, with face white and set, with eyes distended with horror as she watched the countless movements, gave the required vow.

"I swear!" she murmured, "to know no rest, no love, till I have revenged you on him or his!"

Scarcely had the words left her white lips than the countless fell back livid and quivering.

"Mother!" cried the girl, "Oh, Heaven, the name, the name! You have not told me his name!"

The countless opened her lips and strove to speak, but she could not. Then, struggling horribly, she seized her thin hand, pressed two fingers to her forehead, and stabbed in the air.

Twice as the girl stood at the hall-ropes the dying woman repeated her gesture, then, with a spasmodic effort, gasped "The Sign!" and died.

The funeral was over, the countless lay, at rest at last, in the family vault in the chapel which housed its half-ruined head within sight of the entrance. But though the countless had been dead a week the castle was not less dark or gloomy.

The curtains, heavy and ancient, in the library had been drawn aside, and a gleam of afternoon light fell slantwise through the stained windows and revealed the dust upon the table and shelves.

Near the table sat a tall, thin old gentleman, by name Thurgood, by profession a lawyer. Near the window stood the graceful, black-clad figure of the Lady Florio.

Very beautiful she looked, with the golden, crimson stain from the window falling upon the dark, rich braids of her hair and tinting the clear, alive skin. Very beautiful and very grand; steeped, as it were, in the nobility of birth and the gravity of dignity. Her dress was composed of some soft clinging material which draped itself harmoniously round her tall figure.

She held a hat in one hand, the other was resting on the back of one of the high chairs.

Mr. Thurgood looked at her and blinked at her youth and grace and beauty: it was all too beautiful a vision for his old eyes to stare at unmoved.

"You have inserted the advertisement which I gave you?" asked the girl, as the lawyer paused in the work he had in hand and looked up, as if for her to speak.

"I have, my lady, and I have received several answers. Before I give them to you may I be allowed to say a few words of advice—of entreaty?"

Lady Florio looked wistfully though firmly at him.

"I think, seeing that I can guess what they would be, that they would be fruitless."

The lawyer took off his spectacles and wiped them with a suppression of eagerness.

"What is this you have asked me to do?" he said, stretching out his hands, the pocket-handkerchief in one the spectacles in the other. "May I state the case without offending you?"

Lady Florio inclined her head and turned a little nearer to the window, quickly bringing a golden gleam from the stained glass upon her whole figure.

As she stood she looked like an angel rising from a darkling tomb or a martyr wrapped in flame.

"Your mother, the late respected Countess of Ellsmere, died exactly a week ago. I, being the family solicitor, in the partial if not complete confidence of the family, having come down to see that the wishes of the honoured deceased are carried out.

The late earl having died some five years ago, the title has descended to your Cousin Horace—the present Lord Ellsmere—"

"Whom I have never seen," put in the Lady Florio.

"Whom you have never seen," echoed the lawyer, "there having been a misunderstanding deeply rooted between your and his branch of the family. I come down and I find that the castle and the immense wealth of the late respected countess pass to you by her will, there being no entail. The will is not disputed, the few distant relatives present quietly acquiesce and depart, and at your wish you are left alone in this immense—I must be allowed to add, and dreary—place."

"Let me finish the statement," said Lady Florio, turning with a sudden yet smoothly graceful movement, and bending her dark eyes and resolute face on him. "I am left, as you say, the mistress of this castle and of a large sum of money—"

"Together with all jewels and effects whatsoever," murmured the lawyer, parenthetically.

"And I am, in word and deed, totally unfettered; MY OWN MISTRESS?"

The lawyer bowed in confirmation.

"I could, if I were so minded, sell this castle to-morrow, sell the jewels, collect the money, and drop it in the lake yonder?"

And she raised her white hand and pointed to the window.

The lawyer shrugged his shoulders.

"With the exception of the coronet and diamond cross the late respected countess desired might be buried with her, you could do as you like."

Lady Florio inclined her head.

"And should I so desire, you would, as the servant, the old and faithful friend and servant of my family, carry out my wishes and commands?"

The lawyer hesitated.

"Yes," he said; "as should, and I trust, faithful servant of the family, I should, however unpleasantly and against my own inclination, feel compelled by the strength of the ties connecting me with the House of Ellsmere, doubtlessly obey you."

"How comes it then, when I ask you to do much less, when I impose upon you commands much less distasteful and unreasonable, that you hesitate and venture on non-compliance?"

The lawyer was about to speak when she interrupted him, and, in a soft and more winning tone, continued:

"I request you to dismiss the servants, to close the castle, securing all the valuables, which lie so heavily on your mind, in the way that they seem best to you; to place me in possession of a certain sum of money, with the power to obtain more should I want it, and then to consider me as one dead."

The lawyer bowed.

"I agree to obey your commands and carry out your instructions; but, my lady, as an old man, as one who might be considered your natural guardian under these distressing circumstances, I venture to urge upon you the duties of your position."

"I have another and a greater duty to perform," said the Lady Florio, turning to the window.

"The responsibilities of the Lady Florio Ellsmere, the owner of this castle and such wealth, are immense."

"The responsibility I have taken upon myself is greater than any other within the range of possibility," said the girl, with a suppressed frown which darkened her deep eyes and silenced the lawyer.

"Enough; do not let us argue the matter further. My resolve is made, and naught you can say can weaken, much less alter it. Have you dismissed the servants?"

"I have, my lady," said the lawyer, "all excepting the old steward Ford, whom, with his wife, you wished to keep the castle in a state of comparative repair."

Lady Florio inclined her head.

"The answers to the advertisement—where are they?"

"Here," said the lawyer. "I advertised for a lady who would be willing to act as companion and chaperone to a young lady desirous of travelling or living in retirement. These are the answers; if I may be permitted to advise I would suggest that this lady would probably suit your purpose."

And he selected a letter from the heap.

Lady Florio read it.

"Her name is Leclaire—Madame Leclaire—she is the English widow of a French officer."

"Have you seen her?" asked Lady Florio, still reading her letter.

"Yes; and I think she would suit your purpose: She is middle-aged, quiet, somewhat timid, and her references unexceptionable."

"Will you write soon, please?" said Florio glancing at the desk, "and say that I accept her Request her to meet us at the wait—"

I will write myself." And she seated herself at the table, and wrote:

"MADAM—I accept your terms. Be good enough to meet me at the waiting-room of the Great Northern Station at eleven o'clock on Monday next. I shall be dressed in black, and will wear a white rose at my bosom. You will confer a favour, and enter into the spirit of the engagement by keeping my name and the place of our meeting as a secret between you and me."

Yours,

"VALERIA TEMPLE."

She added no date or address, folded the paper calmly and addressed it to—

"MADAME LECHE,"

"Spring Gardens,"

"Kensington."

"That is done," she said, rising quietly. "I should like," she said, with a touch of her former softness, "to see the place once more, for the last time perhaps. Have you the keys?"

"They are here, my lady," said the lawyer, who had watched her as she wrote with a suppressed astonishment and wonder not unmixed with awe. "Is it your pleasure that I accompany you?"

"I thank you, sir, I will go alone," she said, and she took the keys from him, with a slight, graceful inclination of her head.

The lawyer opened the door for her, then crossed over to the window and stared out, rubbing his spectacles in a sort of maze.

The Lady Florice, with the keys in her hands, passed out of the dim library into a dim corridor.

Here she paused to unlock a door which admitted her to the great hall. It deserved its name, for it was as huge as a chapel of ease. Round it were hung pictures of the dead and gone Ellsmere, and on either side stood gaunt suits of armour glittering here and there in the sunshine which penetrated that part of the windows left uncurtained.

Lady Florice paused, in her dark dress, and looked round with dreary yet comprehensive eyes.

"You will be lonely, my ancestors," she said, with a sigh, that was almost a smile. "Lonely, I leave you now, to work out the task set upon me. When shall I return to you?"

The pictures glowered down upon her in ominous silence, and she turned and ascended the stairs. From room to room, unlocking the doors, and relocking them as she went, the dark figure of the young solitary girl paced.

Then at last she entered that room wherein her mother had died.

The bed was empty, and the room in order; the light falling about the spot where she had knelt when her mother had forced the oath upon her, but her fancy called up the scene, and as she stood by the bedside and looked down she saw again the thin frantic hands making the sign.

As she turned to leave the room her eyes fell upon a picture which lay upon an old bureau.

Near it was a small heap of papers and tarnished trinkets, which the lawyer had that morning collected from one of the drawers.

The light fell upon the picture and she took it up. It was a miniature, the portrait of a man with an oval, smiling face, beautiful as a woman's, with a man's crisp chestnut hair clustering on the brow.

It was a face to be remembered, and the girl, as she mused over it, wondered whence it had come and of whom it was the portrait.

She had almost taken it with her, but a nameless horror of everything in the room caused her to lay it down where she found it, and, turning with noiseless footsteps, she passed out.

Half an hour afterwards she entered the library. She was dressed in a dark travelling suit and a thick veil concealed her face.

The lawyer started.

"Here are the keys," she said. "Have you the money I spoke of?"

"It is here, my lady," said the lawyer, handing her a pocket-book.

"And you have my instructions clearly set down?"

"Yes, and I will obey them," said Mr. Thurgood, sorrowfully.

"Then I will say farewell," said the Lady Florice, holding out her small, firm hand. "I rely upon your discretion, your secrecy and your honour. When I have anything to communicate I will write to you; until then forget that I live."

"That," said the lawyer, bowing over her hand, "is more difficult than you imagine. I will obey you, however, my lady, as I am in duty bound to do. I will not seek you or in any way endeavour to ascertain your movements. The estate you may safely trust to these hands, which have guarded it these many years past, and I would to Heaven that I could by persuasion or entreaty induce you to relinquish this wild and dangerous course."

"You could not do so," said Lady Florice. "I

do trust everything to you, and I thank you. Farewell!"

Before the lawyer could wipe the tears which had sprung to his eyes the door had closed upon her and he was in possession of the deserted castle.

CHAPTER II.

A combination and a form, indeed? Where every god did seem to set his seal To give the world assurance of a man.

Just about the hour and on the same day on which Lady Florice, or Valeria Temple, as she had chosen to call herself, left Ellsmere Castle in the fulfilment of her vow, a party of gentlemen sat in the balcony of an hotel on the River Thames, enjoying themselves.

The remains of a small and elegant little dinner were still on the table within the room, and several bottles of sparkling Moselle, to say nothing of Chateau Margaux and other choice wines, were temptingly and conveniently disposed on chairs and tables near them.

The odour of tobacco, produced by the combination of cigars of the finest brands, mingled with the clear evening atmosphere, and the silence of the pretty spot was broken very often by the loud laughter of some of the party.

Glancing at them as they lay along the balcony floor or lounged in the easiest of smoking-chairs, one would have said that they had not a care in the world and that if the gods had chosen that moment for the last of the gentlemen's lives the gods would have fixed on the happiest.

Yet three out of the six wore clothes which they never intended paying for, and the remainder, no doubt, had some skeletons which followed them even to Richmond and drank out of the same champagne glasses with them.

Let us listen.

"You see," said one of them, a fair-haired giant, who lay extended full length, with his face turned up to the skies, as if he meant never to rise again, and whose name was Willie Nugent, "you see how it is with Ellsmere. It's awkward, to say the least of it. How would you fellows like to be an earl?"

"Very much indeed," said one, lazily stretching over for the wine and nearly upsetting himself from his chair.

"An earl, with nothing else to live upon but a coronet. Some earls have nothing else, you know, but they had it sometime, and ran through it. But Ellsmere never had it. The estate wasn't entailed, and the whole of it was left to his aunt, the countess."

"Awfully piling for Ellsmere," said another: "but all right now the countess is dead."

"No," said Willie Nugent, "that's just it, you see; of course Ellsmere expected a fair share of the money, but the countess left it all to her daughter."

"Who knows her address?" said one. "I want an heiress."

"Every penny of it, and Ellsmere is just as badly off as ever. He lives hard, as you see; how he manages it I don't know, perhaps some of you fellows, who always have all the good things of this world but the money, can tell me."

"That's cool!" exclaimed one, indignantly.

"When we all know that if it came to a toss-up for this little spread, and you lost it, Willie, you'd have to jump over this balcony; you couldn't pay."

"That's perfectly true, my dear fellow," said Willie, trying to light a cigar without rising and narrowly escaping a burnt nose. "That's true of all of us, I expect, except Howard there, and he's got more money than brains."

"Thank you!" said Harry Howard, who was the son of a retired cloth-merchant, and had given the dinner and many more like it, and was good-natured enough to bear any impudence from the pack of lords and honourables who feasted on him. "I don't know what you would do without my money."

"Borrow somebody else's, of course," said the imperturbable Willie. "But, I say, didn't you ask Ellsmere?"

"Yes, and he promised he'd come," said Harry Howard. "But you know what he is. Some fellow has proposed billiards or loo, or anything else, and he'd throw us up. I think Ellsmere was born cutting a pack of cards."

There was a laugh at this, and before the echo had died out the person of whom they spoke entered the room.

It was Horace Lord Ellsmere.

He was tall—all the Ellsmeres boasted of stature—thin and elegant looking, some said handsome; but in reality there wanted something in the eyes to give him that last touch which makes a man worthy of the designation. The eyes were the faulty part, and, as if he knew it, the young earl was in the habit of drooping his lids and lashes. That gave him somewhat a sinister look, and so spoiled the whole.

He paused as he saw the remains of what had been a really artistic dinner, but quickly, smoothed that expression of disappointment away as he crossed the room, and, joining the group, said:

"Better late than never," as Death said to the tax-collector. Here I am, Howard, with all my apologies referred to the state of my stomach, which, like my purse, is empty."

"Why on earth didn't you come sooner?" said Willie Nugent. "There's nothing left—or we should have eaten it. Can't we ring something up?"

"Yes, I know—a cold mutton chop and a greasy cheese," said the earl, with a grimace. "No, make room, you fellows! I'll have some brown bread, a truffle, and some of this Margaux. It won't be the worst dinner I've had."

The waiter was summoned to bring the comestibles and the earl quietly proceeded to make the apology for a meal.

When he had finished he lighted a cigar, and leaning back offered his excuses.

"I'm sorry," he said, "for my own sake, for I can see you've had a nice little spread; but I couldn't help it. Business. You know the countess died the other day of course; all the world knows it. Well, I wrote to the young lady, confound her! who has come into the lot and offered to assist her—or—or—in any way; live at the castle and look after the estate, you know."

"Very disinterested!" murmured Willie Nugent.

"Well?" said the others.

"What do you think? I got a letter back, not from the girl—confound her again!—but from a solicitor, telling me that Lady Florice Ellsmere declined with thanks my offer of assistance and intended shutting the castle up, handing the estate over to the solicitor, and travelling. Of course I wrote back that I should like to see my cousin—she is my cousin, you know—and the lawyer replied curtly that the Lady Florice politely declined to see me, and requested that any further communication I might make might come through her solicitor, as her movements for some time would be uncertain."

"A nice cut," said Willie. "What did you do?"

"Went down there at once, and found the place as quiet and close as the grave—the servants gone—and the mistress herself gone or going, anyway I was refused admittance and had to come back—"

"Unsatisfied," said Willie.

The earl frowned, he did not like Willie Nugent's interruptions.

"Exactly; and here I am."

"We're very glad to see you," said Howard, filling his guest's glass.

"Here's better luck to you next time," said Willie Nugent, adding inwardly: "And here's hoping the poor girl may always get as clear of you, my lord."

"Thanks," said the earl. "I had had luck all through last month, and I sped it would change; it hasn't, so I'll have to raise some more money on something."

As he spoke one of the men who had been leaning over the balcony exclaimed:

"I say, here's a fellow rowing well; look here, he's coming up the stream like clockwork. He stops here seemingly."

Some of the men rose and looked over, among them Lord Ellsmere.

He looked down at the river for a moment, then exclaimed:

"Ah, that reminds me! I say, Howard, I met a fellow to-day at the Travellers' Club, a decent fellow from Italy, an Englishman. We had a turn at billiards and as he said he meant to take a pull on the river I asked him to join us here; hope I didn't do wrong."

"No, quite right," put in Howard.

"And here he is!" said Lord Ellsmere.

"What's his name—be quick!" said the host, "he's coming upstairs."

"I'm hanged if I don't forget!" muttered Lord Ellsmere. "I know he played a good game at billiards, he gave me reason to remember that! What was his name? Ah! I've got it. Raven: Edgar Raven."

As he spoke the door opened and the stranger entered.

He stood for a moment, to pick his acquaintance of the morning from the group, and the group on the balcony had a chance of criticizing him.

What they saw was a stalwart, graceful, strength-denoting form, with a tawny moustache, and a pair of dark brown eyes, that though they were calmly and serenely at rest at that moment gave evidence in the flash of light with which they recognized Lord Ellsmere of a fire both fierce and melting.

As he raised his straw hat he revealed a finely shaped head, covered with a thick but closely cut mass of rich chestnut hair.

"Here you are," said Ellsmere, approaching and

shaking hands. "And here am I, only a few minutes before you. You are late."

"I am late," said the stranger. "The tide was stronger than I expected."

"Have you dined?" said Mr. Howard.

"I thank you, yes," said Edgar Raven. "Some hours since."

"Then I may pass the Maccle," said Howard, and he did so.

Half a dozen cigar-cases were offered; Mr. Raven accepted a cigar from one with a courtly yet cordial ease, and the conversation flowed on.

There was something in the voice and whole bearing of the man which denoted him a gentleman, born and polished, and soon, as the cigars burned freely and the wine passed rapidly, he showed that he could not only look handsome and courtly but talk well.

Questions were put to him of this place and that, and he replied to them all, talking of one country and another with the freedom of a bon-comarade and a great traveller.

Italy he knew well—indeed, he had only just come from Venice.

Spain he had seen, and Willie Nugent elicited the information that he had seen the Rocky Mountains.

Anecdotes enlivened the chit-chat, and when lights were brought the company were laughing and too merry to think of making a move.

"Your drag is here, Howard," said Willie, "we'll all perch in it and go back together. That is if Mr. Raven does not object."

"Not at all. I shall be very glad," said the stranger. "I am quite free."

"What shall we do?" said Ellsmere, seizing the moment of silence that fell when the lights were brought with the avidity of a born gamester. "What do you say to loo?"

"Agreed," said Howard, the rest nodding or echoing. "Waiter, bring the lights to this table and some cards."

"Do you play?" said Ellsmere, who was the first to be seated.

"Yes," said the stranger, who had risen from his chair and was leaning over against the balcony, and who turned with a slight start, as if he had been deep in some reverie, "yes, if there is room."

The party was made and the game proceeded. After a while that same look of absence and self-communion came over Edgar Raven's face.

He roused himself suddenly, however, as Ellsmere proposed higher stakes, and played with less indifference.

Presently the game grew unlimited. Several, after an hour's play rose and declared it too high for them.

At last Ellsmere and Edgar Raven were left alone, Ellsmere having won and the stranger having lost heavily.

Lord Ellsmere laughed.

"What is to be done? Are you stumped?"

A small group collected round the table, watching the faces of the two men, the one—Ellsmere—a gambler, by instinct, slightly flushed by his winnings, holding the pack with tight, hot fingers; Edgar Raven, looking dreamily at the suppressed excitement on the face of the other and calmly rolling a cigarette between his fingers.

"How much have I lost?" he said.

"Eh?" replied Ellsmere. "About five hundred pounds, I should think."

"A large sum," said Willie, warningly. "Enough is as good as a feast."

"But more is sometimes better, don't you think, my lord?" said the stranger, with a calm, indifferent smile. "We will close with an appeal to the goddess of pure chance. Shall we cut, my lord, for double or quits?"

"As you like," said Ellsmere, trying to speak carelessly, though the veins in his forehead swelled. "Double or quits. Highest or lowest?"

"Which you please," replied the stranger, indifferently.

"Highest, then," said Ellsmere, and he cut a ten.

The stranger paused a moment to light his cigarette, then he cut the remainder of the pack, and with a serene smile held up a five.

"A thousand pounds!" ran the murmur, and the men looked hard at him, but, without the change of a muscle or the slightest variation of expression Edgar Raven threw some notes on the table.

"There are ten hundred-pound notes. You must treat me as a stranger."

Lord Ellsmere took them up with a hand that would tremble, try as he would to keep it still, and, lifting a glass of champagne to his lips, said:

"Here's to our better acquaintance."

"I drink with you to that," said Edgar Raven, and, with a smile, he raised his glass,

There was no attempt at effort or unnatural carelessness.

The next moment he had turned to Willie Nugent and was chatting as if nothing had happened and hundred-pound banknotes were as common as blackberries.

The wheels of the drag roused the company to a sense of the time and the distance from London, and they descended to the road.

Then the stranger suddenly changed his mind. Looking up to the moon, he said:

"If you will pardon me, I think I will get back by water; the man may think, if I do not return, that he has lost his boat."

And though they tried hard they could not persuade him to go by road.

They one and all accompanied him to the river side and saw him set adrift, then, as he bent his long arms and pulled off into the moonlit stream, Willie Nugent turned to the rest and exclaimed:

"Well, if that fellow isn't a prince in disguise, I'll eat my head! Whew! he loses a thousand pounds as if it were eightpence!"

"He's a Russian serf-holder," said one of the men.

"I say, a director of one of those Indian companies," suggested another.

"I bet he's an Irish peer just come into his property," hazarded a third.

"Nonsense!" said Willie Nugent. "The fellow is an Englishman; he's got English voice, English face, and English muscle, by Jove! And he's seen money lost abroad; he lost just as if he were winning. Ellsmere, you mustn't lose sight of him. He's worth ten thousand a year to you."

Ellsmere uttered an inaudible imprecation at Willie Nugent's impudence, but added, also inaudibly:

"I don't mean to."

Meanwhile the subject of all their speculations was pulling down stream, his face calmly reflective, and his eyes fixed on the moon as if he were communing with it.

He was after a fashion, for suddenly he murmured:

"Always the same. Here as elsewhere the shadow pursues and haunts me. It will never leave me, anger myself and worry myself as I will. What is it, I wonder? It falls on me when I think myself most merry, as often and surely as when I am alone. If it were a tangible feeling of dread, if it were the memory of something terrible and distinct I could get rid of it. But this nameless feeling of the past, this sensation of being followed wherever I go by a cloudy presence, this feeling of being wrapped up in some one else's life haunts me beyond bearing. Those good fellows thought I bore my loss well. How should they know that I was not thinking of it, but that the cloud had fallen on me urging me to rise and fly? I can find no rest for the sole of my feet. The feeling my father spoke of on his death-bed has fallen to me, and I am like the Wandering Jew, ever restless, and pursued by I know not what."

"Bah! Let me cast such fancies at the moon, which alone should heed them. London must be reached ere I can sleep. Begone, dark shadow, wheresoever thou springest from, and haunt me not, or, if thou wilt come, come in some shape and form, be it human or fiendish, and I will confront thee!"

To be continued.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME.

How solemn the thoughts which can but recur even to the most thoughtless that we, even as all things by which we are surrounded, are passing away. It may be in a few short weeks or months, or, at most, a few fleeting years, and the places we now occupy will be vacant, or filled by strangers, and we shall be forgotten, save by a very few, ere the grass shall spring above the mound containing our frail bodies. "Passing away." It is the inevitable doom of all. We fade as do the leaves, and scarcely less rapidly. We perhaps look forward to years of happiness. Hope whispers of future honours and pleasures, of fortune and its many friends, and we silence the thought taught us by observation that we are passing away; and when the voice of wisdom would fain beseech us to prepare for the final transit we turn a deaf ear to its admonitions, and strive to think even as now we shall continue.

"Our days flow away like the water, and we spend our years as a tale is told." Born on by the relentless course of time, we find ourselves nearing the shores of the unseen land, and pausing ere we cross the dread river of death. Memory will but too faithfully recall the golden hours and days we suffered to pass unimproved while yet we had time for amendment. But, alas! how vain the regrets caused by these reflections. We are soon to be ushered into the presence of Him who holds the "keys of all the creeds"—the arbiter from whose

decision none can ever appeal—there to be sentenced to an eternity of bliss or of endless woe. We should all think of these things, though the constant occupations and sordid cares of every day would seem to leave but little time for aspiration after things Heavenly—those that endure for ever; not like the frail things of earth, that are continually eluding our hold and passing away. Faithfully should we strive to win the great reward held high above all earthly things as a prize for the "just made perfect." The task, though difficult, may be achieved by faithfully performing the task allotted to us in this state of probation. Walking ever in the path of duty, though made thorny by inclinations crushed, hopes blighted, and sorrow ever coming faster and yet faster, we shall at last enter into the home of rest and peace and joy, prepared on high by our Heavenly Father for those who weary not in well doing.

THE BRIDE'S STORY.

WHEN I was but a country lass, some fifteen years ago, I lived where flows the old brook through meadows wide and low, There first, when skies were bending blue and blossoms blowing free, I saw a ragged little boy who went to school with me.

His homespun coat was frayed and worn, with patches cover'd o'er, His hat—oh! such a hat as that was never seen before—

The boys and girls when first he came they shouted in their glee, And jeered the ragged little boy who went to school with me.

His father was a labouring man, and mine was highly born, Our people held him and his in great contempt and scorn;

They said I should not stoop to own a playmate such as he, The bright-eyed little boy who went to school with me.

Yet spite of all the sneers around from children better dressed, My heart went out to meet the heart that beat within his breast;

His look was fond, his voice was low, and strange as it may be, I loved the ragged little boy who went to school with me.

For years they had forgotten him, but when again we met, His look, his voice, his gentle ways remained in memory yet.

They saw alone the man of mark, but I could only see The bright-eyed, ragged little boy who went to school with me.

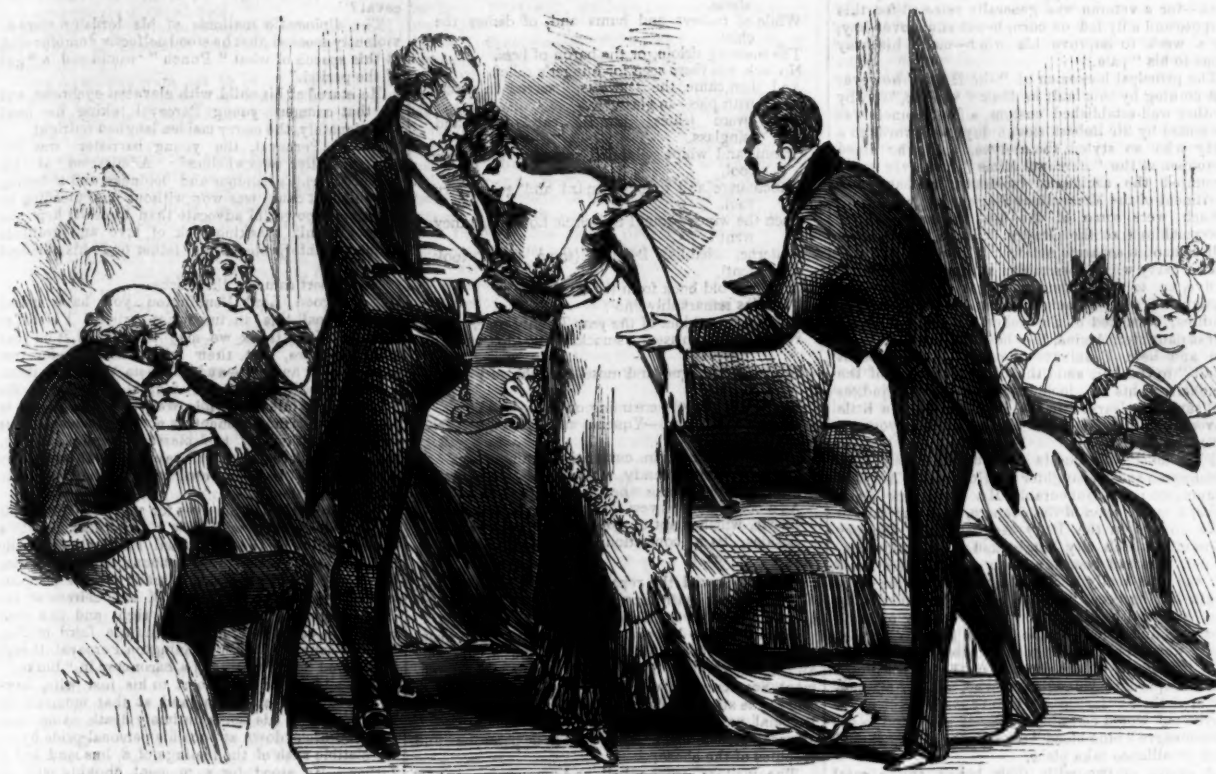
He had remembered me, it seemed, as I remembered him, Nor time nor honours in his mind the cherished past could dim,

Young love had grown to older love, and so to-day you see I wed the ragged little boy who went to school with me.

M. M.

ELEPHANTS in India are yearly becoming more scarce and more valuable, owing to the want of discrimination shown by sportsmen.

A WONDERFUL CLOCK.—A marvellous piece of mechanism in the way of clocks has just been exhibited in Paris. It is an eight-day instrument, with dead beat escapement maintaining power. It chimes the quarters, plays sixteen tunes, plays three tunes every twelve hours, or will play at any time required. The hands go round as follows:—One, once a minute; one, once an hour; one, once a week; one, once a month; one, once a year. It shows the moon's age, the rising and setting of the sun, the time of high and low water, half-ebb and half-flood and by a beautiful contrivance there is a part which represents the water, which rises and falls, lifting some ships at high-water tide as if they were in motion, and as it recedes leaves these little automaton ships dry on the sands. The clock shows the hour of the day, day of the week, day of the month, month of the year, and in the day of the month there is a provision made for the long and short months. It shows the signs of the zodiac; it strikes or not, chimes or not, as may be desired; and it has the equation table, showing the difference of clock and sun every day in the year. If it would sing a song and smoke a cigar and drink the health of the observer in champagne its round of usefulness and wonderfulness would be complete.



[FROM FATHER TO LOVER.]

OLD RUFFORD'S MONEY; OR, WON WITHOUT MERIT, LOST WITHOUT DESERVING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
"Fighting for Freedom," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXVII.

All who joy would win
Must share it—Happiness was born a twin.
Byron.

MICHAELMAS DAY, from time immemorial, had been a day of special festivity and general hospitality at Broadmoor Grange.

So far back did some of these "customs" date that the historical roast goose which formed the dinner, or luncheon, of "good Queen Bess" when she received the news of the destruction of the Spanish Armada, and in memory of which mercy loyal subjects make a burnt offering on the 29th of September of the bird which saved the Capitol, was a mere "modern instance."

The merry-making began in the forenoon with various sports in the Home Park for young and old, a portion of that at other times sacred enclosure being a privileged "fair field."

Gipsies arrived with their swings, roundabouts, cock-shies, and turnery ware; showmen with their giants and dwarfs, fat pigs, and living skeletons, fat boys and fat girls.

There were to be seen, "for the low charge of one penny," a calf and a sheep, each with five legs, and a live rattlesnake with none. There too came "the pig-faced lady, who fed out of a silver trough," presented by a clean-shaven bear seated upright in a gown of printed cotton, and an unshaven bruiser, in a shaggy brown coat "au naturel," who, like Oliver Goldsmith's bear, "danced only to the gentlest of tunes."

There too were dromedaries with two humps and camels with one; an Albino lady (a princess, was understood) with pink eyes and snow-white hair; and a Red Indian (from Whitechapel), who danced a waltz, sang a war-song, threw the hatchet (he was clever at that), and with grimaces that would have frightened a Fiji islander scalped an enemy's cranium of its covering of painted bladder and horse-hair.

But the glory of the fair was a quadrangle of heavy caravans, behind an acre of canvas stretched on tall

poles, whereon was depicted a gigantic elephant, with a golden howdah on his back containing half a dozen oriental princes, marching tranquilly among all sorts of ferocious Bengal tigers, showing their fangs and pursuing hunters, or "chawing-up," as a Yankee would say whole fields-full of calico-clad shikarree-wallahs.

But there was one feature which especially attracted the attention of the rustic throngs. It depicted in violent colours a piebald boa-constrictor anchored by nine folds of his tail round the feathery branches and squamous trunk of what seemed a fifty-foot palm tree, while his body made some seven turns in scarf-ring fashion round the carcass of a black bison as big as four Smithfield-club prize-bulls; nor was this all, the monster had fixed the laceratory fangs of his broad flat head, the size of a large frying-pan, in the carotid artery of Mr. Bison, which spouted forth a fountain of red-lead (representing blood), while it was evident the reptile was cracking the stout ribs of the struggling brute as a boy would flibbert-out.

And all this was to be seen "alive, alive, oh!" within, for the charge of sixpence!

Then too there was a street of ginger-bread stalls, toys, drums, rattles, trumpets, whips, dolls that opened and shut their eyes, and back-scratchers which the vendors declared contained "all the fun of the fair for twopence."

Then the youths and hobbledohys who were above the "fair nonsense" had their great cricket match, the last "out" of the season, or which was described as Broadmoor C.C. against All England, "All England" being represented by ten of the Smethwick Club and their "professional" bowler, who was one of the "county eleven" at Lord's and the Oval; despite which advantage, on more than one occasion the "Broadmoor Eleven" had it on record in their score-book that they had beaten "All England," with all sorts of "wickets to go down," a feat which "All England" certainly neither knew of nor cared about.

Then there were kiss-in-the-ring, catch-me-who-can and other romping games; a leg of mutton and a small porker, on the top of a couple of greased poles, gave the plough-tail lads and bird-scaring boys rare fun and a reward for the exercise of their "climbing ambition."

Within doors the Hall servants dispensed plain refreshments—huge lumps of salted beef, cold roasts, bread and cheese, and undressed salads, with sound old ale, to all comers.

We have already spoken of the noble deer of Broadmoor Chase and said that among the "sports" of Broadmoor were some more ancient than even the

Elizabethan roast goose. One was neither more nor less than a stag-hunt, a fine buck being provided for the purpose by the owner of the domain.

This was fixed for eleven in the forenoon, that all who chose might attend the meet at the moor on the confines of Broadmoor Chase.

It must not be supposed that this "meet," like those of the Royal buckhounds at Ascot, Swinley, Binfield, Bucknell or Burnham Beeches, was merely for the delectation of the chivalry of Belgravia and the benefit of the horse-dealers of Piccadilly and May-fair and to show off the riding of the denizens of South Kensington, Tyburnia and Westbourne—far from it. It was meant for the special enjoyment not only of the pedestrian peasantry but of any neighbour or tenant who could find four legs to supplement his own two.

This hunt had been held from time immemorial every week in each year between the 12th day of August and the 8th of October, that being the interval in which the head of the stag is perfected in its branching beauty and the breeding season begins.

October came. The buckhounds were kennelled for a month and a week, after which, if the weather proved fine and propitious, the hounds were hunted until Christmas Day.

This annual custom of the Percevals was, by tradition of the neighbourhood, a condition of tenure by which they held certain lands, and a charterly preserved at the Grange, dating from the reign of the Edwards, bestowed on "Sir Abured de Piercevale" lands therein described, "lying wythin ye king's forest of Brodemoor, for the servyce of a fat buck at S. Mychaelsmass and the mayntaynyng of xiiij couplys of houndys for the kynges malesties use whanne that he shal be plesed to folowe the staggs in Brodemoor Chase."

There were many like tenures, especially in Devon, Somerset and Hants, but few of them have survived the increase of the population and the new ownerships of the land.

At Broadmoor, however, the "people's day," at what Squire Frankland, Squire Hartwell and your true, hard-riding foxhunter calls "calf-hunting," was not attended throughout by the "swell" visitors at the Grange, or by Sir Robert Perceval and his friends, for that matter, farther than being present at the "turn-out" of the stag, when the fun commenced, which generally ended in the hunted animal "soiling" (i.e., taking to the water) in a steep-banked river some five or seven miles from home, whereupon the "staggers" were at fault, and for a day or two afterwards an "outlying" deer was reported by the rustics.

About the third day, however, the crafty old buck—for a veteran was generally selected for this purpose and silly fed on corn, beans and clover-hay, for a week to improve his wind—made his way home to his "pale."

The principal horsemen of "the Hunt" however lost nothing by this fault in their "vanerie," for, by another well-established custom, a fine haunch was presented by Sir Robert eleven days afterwards to a party who so styled themselves, and who dined thereupon at the "Perceval Arms" and over again recounted the accidents, incidents, mishaps and merriment of the Michaelmas Stag-hunt.

Such were some of the old-fashioned outdoor merry-makings at the Grange. Those within doors will demand a separate notice.

The party which assembled at dinner at the hour of five, up to which time carriages of all patterns brought all sorts of neighbouring gentry and their families, consisted of Sir Robert Perceval and his eldest daughter, Amina, the host and hostess, their son and heir, Pennington Perceval—these present "call" to the bar, amid the congratulations of the benchers of his inn, including several of the judges and sergeants learned in the law, had been a little "event" in his immediate circle—and his younger daughter, Louise.

First among the guests in precedence were Lord Pennington and his daughter the Honourable Augusta Pennington; the Honourable Mr. Beauchamp Barreacres, a needy scion of the peerage, who was said to have an eye on the Lady Augusta; Sir Digby Doomville, a rich city knight and government contractor, who had bought a large estate a few miles off, and was really a clever agriculturist, his early origin having been "racy of the soil;" this worthy man had with him his spouse, a lady of such capacious dimensions and so fond of good living that a city wag said that, like the last new street, she had been "widened at the expense of the corporation," and a couple of rosy daughters, who, as their mamma declared their "forties and beauty made them fit for corinths," would certainly add good red blood to the more meagre "blue blood" of ancient nobility should such an alliance take place.

A squire or two, with their ladies, and a rural dean, who had been Sir Robert's chum at Oxford, completed the visitors.

Of the "Broadmoor people" there was no lack, as might be expected from Sir Robert's hospitable instincts as "a fine old English gentleman." There was the rector, Dr. Sherlock, and his excellent partner; and we may well suppose one of the earliest invitation-cards filled up by the trio who sat in friendly counsel in Sir Robert's study, consisting of himself, Pennington Perceval and Amina, bore the name of Captain Sherlock.

Another early one was that to Ralph Chesterion, Esq., to whom Sir Robert felt he owed that reparation which an error in his estimate of a man's character and conduct demands from one who has even unintentionally injured him.

Though not strictly belonging to Broadmoor, Bushby Frankland, and his brother-in-law, Squire Hartwell, with his wife and daughters, were among the invited, en revanche for Bushby's London "at home." There were also several members of the Broadmoor and Rufford Hunt, 'splendid in pink and the club-bution.

A separate note to Cecilia from Amina placed her beyond the formality of a card.

Dr. Halliwell and his lady and Mr. Abernethy Ashton and his lady were also gladdened by the receipt of a request of the honour of their company at a ball or supper on the evening of the 29th inst., "dancing at nine o'clock," which we may be sure was not neglected, while the redoubtable Mrs. Colonel Macgregor and the "last rose of summer" left "pining on its stem," the lovely Helena Macgregor, were rejoiced at the arrival at the front gate of Clansplaine Villa of a mounted man in the Perceval livery, who delivered a double-shotted missive, bidding them also to the feast and dance.

The dinner was a good dinner, as all dinners at the Grange were, and we cannot do better than describe it in Ingoldsby rhyme:

In due time the banquet was placed on the board,
"In the very best style," which implies, in a word,
"All the dainties the season" (and host) "could afford."

There were snipes, there were rails,
There were woodcocks and quails,
Fricandeau, fricassees,
Ducks and green peas,

Cotelettes à l'Indienne and chops à la saubise
(Which last you may call "onion sauce" if you please),

Omelettes and haricots, stews and ragouts,

And pork griskins, which Jews still refuse and abuse,

While of turkeys and hams and, of dishes the chief,

The smoking sirloin, or the baron of beef,
No lack was there seen for hunger's relief.

And then came the "sweets," served in silver,
with pies—in glass,

Too, were jellies, punch, calves-foot and lingglass,

Creams and whipt syllabubs, some hot and some cool,

Blancmange and quince-custard and gooseberry fool.

Then the wines—round the circle how softly they went!

Sauterne, chablis, Beaune (some ladies took tent),

Some old hock from the Rhine

Was remarkably fine:

Steinberger cabinet of the year Twenty-nine,

Which a connoisseur, smacking his lips, called "divine."

While champagne and moselle of the very best brand.

West popping and creaming on every band.

There was claret—Yquem and Chateau Margaux,

Liqueurs—marasquin, curacao, noyau,

With old cherry-brandy, which all of you know
Many dowagers take when their spirits are low,

As a compromise sweet for the more potent cau-De-vie, which is apt to trouble the nerves—

Besides 'tis a confection, so stinks with preserves.

Coffee followed the repast, and the ladies retired, old port being patronized by the fox-hunters and claret by most of the London guests.

Meantime the ladies in the drawing and ante-chambers gossiped and inspected the decorations and lighting-up of the suite of dancing and refreshment apartments, which included the great hall, where the standing decorations were of the orthodox baronial pattern, huge antlers, banners and broadswords, pieces of armour, tattered pennons and trophies of the chase.

The visitors to the ball and supper were now arriving, and Sir Robert, according to the modern and more commendable fashion, announced that the ladies awaited their presence in the drawing-room, when one and all rose and joined them, except a few inveterate club-men, who strolled forth on the terrace to whiff a mild cigar.

The merry-making, for it was merry-making, went on cheerily. Quadrilles, schottisches and galops succeeded each other, and many even of the more youthful dancers were dropping off when, at eleven, an hour which would paralyze Belgravia, supper was announced and, what was more, done ample justice to, and when the company re-assembled in the hall it was plainly seen that there were many deserters from the dance.

Among those we may note as conspicuous by their absence Lord Pennington, his daughter, the Lady Augusta, Sir Robert Perceval and his son; and it would certainly be an omission not to account for their temporary absence by following them to the private parlour of Sir Robert Perceval, where we shall find them in important converse.

"I cannot say—it would be mere affectation to do so," said Lord Pennington, with a studied diplomatic manner, though with some emotion in his voice, "that I am surprised at the communication which has been addressed to me by the son of my old friend and neighbour Sir Robert Perceval; yet I think, Sir Robert, you will agree with me that at such a crisis in our family affairs, such a momentous question as the union of these two young people representing the Percevals and the Penningtons should not be settled out of hand on such an occasion as the present. I will presume, my dear Augusta, that you have well considered and given a decided preference to the addresses of Mr. Pennington Perceval over all other suitors. I do not ask you, my dear child, to say so, but I say that I assume it. Young people do not think of these necessary things called settlements and those indispensable preliminaries which must precede such an alliance as we are now about to negotiate, or to break off—"

The person most entitled to interrupt his proxy lordship here interposed, to the destruction of his set speech, for he it known his lordship had for some time foreseen this "crisis" in family affairs, as he pleased to call it.

"My dear, my loving father," exclaimed Augusta Pennington, "I know we have your consent—I've known it a long time, Sir Robert," added she, laughing. "Did I not tell you, father dear," asked the straightforward girl, "that I was determined to undeceive and to reject the Honourable Mr. Barreacres and Captain Dangies? And have I not told them both, this very morning, that I have promised my hand

where I have given my heart, to Pennington Perceval?"

The diplomatic instincts of his lordship were so violently shocked that he stood perfectly dumbfounded at this speech of what "Punch" would call a "girl of the period."

He stared at his child with elevated eyebrows, and at that moment, young Perceval taking her hand affectionately, the merry maiden laughed outright.

As to Perceval, the young barrister was unprofessionally overwhelmed. Admiration at his affianced bride's candour and boldness, and a feeling that his first cause was won without his pleading by a far more powerful advocate than himself, kept him silent; but his speaking look of love and gratitude needed no interpreter to his father or to his affianced bride.

Sir Robert came to the rescue.

"My good Lord Pennington, you have indeed meant to call this an important 'crisis'; I feel it so myself. Yet I think we may as well, if it be your good pleasure, set their minds at rest—for true love is ever anxious—and tell them that with themselves rests their future of mutual happiness. We will not now talk of worldly wealth, which, though in itself an important element, is not itself the substitute or compensation for the blessing of pure affection. Pennington Perceval, you have my consent, as heartily and as freely as I gave my own with my hand to your long-lost mother."

Sir Robert shaded his eyes for a moment with his handkerchief, then withdrew it, and looked with a cheery smile at the perplexed lord, who certainly had a misty idea that he was bound in consideration of the dignity of his house to make a mere pompous parley before the surrender of the heiress of the Pennington peerage in her own right and to a challenge of a commoner, for such did the Lord of Pennington consider Minister Pennington Perceval, though he showed fifty descents of a baronetcy in "Burke."

The alliance of Sir Robert to his lost wife, however, visibly affected him, and at that moment the memory of his son's untimely death came upon him and broke down at once his personal pride by an irresistible rush of the feelings of a husband and a father. He stood for a moment, choking with an endeavour to suppress his emotion, then, gazing on the handsome pair before him, his eyes filled with tears of mingled joy and grief, and, embracing his daughter, who reciprocated his caress by falling on his shoulder and burying her blushes in his bosom, he muttered:

"May Heaven send you a husband worthy of your goodness, my darling daughter! Rank cannot add to the honour and bearing of the name of Perceval, which I shall desire you, my child, to bear henceforth combined with my own, which your husband, for such he shall be, by some mysterious prefiguring of this alliance, already owns. His two names will henceforth be as one; and that this joining of the houses of Pennington and Perceval may transmit your honour and mine to a remote posterity is my prayer, my good friend, Sir Robert."

His lordship, who was a soft-hearted man at bottom, having thus delivered his "fraught bosom" of some of "the perilous stuff" of his set speech, was very considerably relieved, and when the part came despatched to the hall, where their absence had been pretty generally discussed, the joyous expression on every one of their countenances and the unusually free courtesy of the formal Lord Pennington, who, with Sir Robert, at once stood up, and possessing himself of the hand of Amina Perceval, while Sir Robert solicited, and of course obtained, that of Cecilia Chesterion, young Perceval coming next with the Lady Augusta, called aloud to the band to "Strike up the Sir Roger de Coverley!" threw the whole company into a whirl of delighted astonishment.

Everybody had a partner, and the fun grew hot and furious. Indeed, even the Miss Macgregores (married and single) were noticed to be inspired with the general jollity, and exhibited their national characteristic in the vigour with which they went down the line, took hands across, performed dos-à-dos, swung their partners, courtesied, and went through all the romping figures of the old English country-dance. Such dancing, however, like a fox-hunter's burst and a donkey's gallop, must be short though sweet. "Tis the pace that kills," and Sir Roger de Coverley took all, as one of the farmer's sons expressed it, "clean off their legs." Chairs and seats, cool and warm drinks, shawls and great-coats were sought. Carriages were ordered, and by one of the clock none of the guests of the Grange remained save those who had the privilege of being for the nonce residents within its hospitable walls.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Thus "all went merry as a marriage-bell," and no cloud seemed to shadow the sunny horizon of

check the overflowing of the cup of pleasure with the happy people of Broadmoor.

But while their fountain of happiness thus brimmed over a snake lay concealed amid the flowers which adorned its edge.

These Arcadians were not to be exempted from the common lot of humanity of which Shakespeare has told us in the thousand-times-quoted plaint of Lysander:

Ah, me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear, by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood,
Or else misgraffed in respect to years,
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends;
Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentary as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream,
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That in a splen unfolds both heaven and
earth,
And ere a man can say—Behold!
The jaws of darkness do devour it up—
So quick bright things come to confusion,

But Horace, centuries before him, warned us of the bitter in every sweet:

Medio de fonte leporem
Surgit amari aliquid quod in ipsis floribus angat.

And Byron later has thus paraphrased the Roman bard:

Still from the fount of joy's delicious springs
Some bitter o'er the flowers its bubbling
venom flings.

The postponement of much of this "marrying and giving in marriage" had, however, another and different origin than any one of the numerous impediments enumerated by Lysander, as the reader will presently learn.

The trivial cause from which, like the fall of Troy from the hate of Juno, these "woes unnumbered sprang," was the mistake made by the writing of the name of "Reginald Chesterton" by that gentleman on the three stamped slips of paper presented to him by the pseudonymous Bowman.

The "three months after date" of the first promissory note had nearly elapsed, and Reginald Chesterton, whose habits of life in the interim had undergone no noticeable change, had suffered a continuous nightmare in respect of the undiscoverable holder of the two other bills, Mr. E. Bowman, who was certainly not likely to prove "an airy nothing" though at present he was without "a local habitation or a name" in any law list, or on any doopost in those lanes and places where lawyers most do congregate.

Inquiries repeated night after night at the low taverns and gambling dens where Mr. Bowman seemed to be better known than anywhere else proved fruitless.

From the day of Reginald's victimisation that person had utterly vanished from his accustomed haunts.

Any application to the police, which more than once suggested itself to the miserable young man, must be accompanied by an exposure, which he felt would be ruinous, while it might fail in restoring the bills, which he now felt certain had been in some way put in circulation and negotiated.

The first of the bills was nearly due, and Reginald, with a sum of forty pounds, which he had with difficulty obtained from Mr. Gilbert in anticipation of his quarter's salary, repaired to ——— Street, Strand, to solicit a renewal.

He found Mr. Moss Solomons extremely civil; but complaining sadly of the "tightness in the City," and unable at the instant to see "the gentleman who holds the bill," but quite "sure he'll renew upon reasonable terms," and equally ready to take the money on account which Reginald had brought, and let him know the next morning what could be done in the matter.

This arranged, some questions which Reginald ventured to ask Mr. Moss Solomons resulted in that gentleman fishing out the fact—which he had hitherto carefully guarded—that the missing Mr. Bowman had possessed himself of the young man's written promise to pay on two other documents besides that which Mr. Moss Solomons had cashed.

"Bless me heart!" exclaimed that gentleman, who certainly while he despoiled the Gentiles most unmercifully always kept himself to the windward of the law; "you quite surprise me! Is it possible that fellow has got your name for above two hundred pounds on a stamped paper? I mustn't let my friend in the City know how imprudent you have been, else I'm afraid he wouldn't renew. What in the name of cootness can be done? And you didn't know, my dear sir, anything about the fellow?

Most wonderful!—and a man of business, too—and a banker! Well, well, we live and learn something every day!"

"Can you suggest, Mr. Solomons," asked Reginald, anxiously, "any way of finding the fellow?"

"Well, I'm not quite sure, you see, that you'd get much by finding him—he's not likely to have the bills about him. They'll turn up if we can't contrive to stop them in some way. Yes, they'll turn up in the hands of a third party—perhaps an 'innocent holder,' as the lawyers call it, which is very hard to disprove when there's money to be got by hard swearing. It won't do for those bits of paper to be presented at the Chartered Mercantile," he muttered, as if thinking the matter over to himself. "No, that must be prevented. Let me see. Did he draw the bills?"

"He did."

"Cunning rascal! And are the other two like the one I've got cashed for you?"

"Exactly."

"Did you examine them?"

"I saw that they were for the sums and at the dates that we agreed upon."

"I am afraid that you did not read them carefully," said Mr. Solomons. "In fact, my dear sir, they are not what we call 'bills' at all. There is no sign of Mr. Bowman's name as drawer, and therefore no endorsement. He knew better, or else we'd have nailed Mr. Bowman for a capital felony, clever as he is; and then he'd have turned up the bills. Excuse me a few moments, Mr. Chesterton; I have a clerk who copies all these sorts of documents into a book for fear of accidents that will give it as letter for letter."

Mr. Moss Solomons quickly returned with a green-bound book. He knew well enough all about the note, for the original was in his iron safe.

"There you see. It is just as I said," and he read aloud:

"Seventy-five pounds. London, June twenty-second, eighteen hundred and—That's the heading. It's very plain, too, in the body. 'Three months after date I promise to pay to Mr. Moss Solomons, or bearer—'"

"Pray let me look at that, Mr. Solomons," exclaimed the astonished hearer.

He looked. The transcript was as nearly as might be a facsimile of the original.

He looked again, but could hardly believe his eyes. By an artful arrangement the writer had left such a space at the beginning of the line, before the word "Bearer," and following the previous line which ended with "to pay," as to give room for the words afterwards interpolated.

Reginald explained this trick to Mr. Solomons, who shook his head with affected incredulity.

"That plea, my dear sir, wouldn't go down with a jury," said he. "Your signature's genuine—you don't deny that; and a gentleman who puts his name to stamps without knowing whether they are bills or notes wouldn't get much attention from a jury on the question of alterations after he had parted with them."

Reginald felt his blood boil with indignation. He had never thought of repudiating his handwriting, nor of pleadings, nor of juries; but he swallowed the indignity.

He looked again at the transcript and there were the additional words, beneath his own name, "payable at the Mercantile Chartered Bank of London!"

"This also," said Reginald, placing his finger on the words, "is an addition. It was not there when I signed the note; I would never have permitted that."

"Very likely," observed Mr. Solomons, with extreme sang-froid, very likely. "But he'd swear you instructed him to make the notes so payable; that it was there when you signed it; and one oath's as good as another till the cross-examination comes."

And it had come to this! Reginald Chesterton's word, nay, his oath, was hypothetically valued as balancing the oath of a bill-stealing swindler!

"Do you know anything about this Bowman?" asked Reginald, to divert the conversation. "You said something just now of his signature convicting him of a capital felony—or I misunderstood you."

"And so I did, Mr. Chesterton. I do know something of him; but, I'm sorry to say, little that's good. His right name is Ephraim Ferrett."

"Ephraim Ferrett?"

"Yes. Odd name, isn't it? Good 'un for a lawyer though. Well, Ephraim Ferrett, I should say, to speak the truth, is about the most disreputable, unscrupulous fellow I know. Too clever by half. Well, the thing to be done now is to find out how much, or rather how little, somebody who has got the paper will take to give it up, to be destroyed, and say no more about it. If some money can't be got

you see, in a quiet way, they'll fight it out in a court of law, with a put-up plaintiff, who'll call himself the innocent holder, and who'll swear he gave value for the note, and prove it, too, in the usual way. Then you see, Miashter Chesterton, all the thing must come out, which I suppose wouldn't suit you—eh?"

"That must be prevented at any cost," said Reginald.

"Exactly so. But it's a business, Mr. Chesterton, that I would not be seen in; indeed I wouldn't meddle with it in any way if it was not to serve a gentleman who's fallen into bad hands—very bad hands."

"But you have not told me what is to be done?" said Reginald, anxiously.

"My very good sir, you must not be impatient. We can hardly do anything, that I see, until we hear something about the paper. The date's the same on both of them, I suppose?"

Reginald replied it was so.

"Well, then," continued Mr. Solomons, in a cool, calculating tone, "June the twenty-second—July, August, September, October—yesh, October the twenty-fifth. Bless me, how the time does slip away; and this is the twenty-second of September. We must look sharp. Did you say, Mr. Chesterton, that you would be in cash after the twenty-ninth?"

Now Reginald had never said anything of the sort, but he was heated and confused, and he replied that he expected he should receive some money at that time.

Mr. Moss Solomons knew as much as Reginald himself about that matter, nay, he surmised, and rightly, that the forty pounds he had now deposited in his writing-table drawer was an advance of salary from the bank.

"I shall not meddle in this very unpleasant business," continued Mr. Moss Solomons, "farther than to find out where this paper you have so foolishly—excuse me, but I cannot help saying so—so foolishly parted with, may be. What it will cost you to get it back you will have to settle with other people. We must all, I suppose, buy experience in this world, and few get it without paying for it. I shall see you to-morrow about this other little business at—"

"At half-past five would suit me best."

A clerk entered. Mr. Solomons was wanted in the outer office.

"Very good. We'll talk over the other matter. Good day, Mr. Chesterton; good day. To-morrow at half past five. Good day."

And Mr. Moss Solomons broke up the conference by hurrying into the front office, while Reginald left by a door opening into the passage at the foot of the stairs, and a spring lock being withdrawn by an attendant "buttons," who had been called from the kitchen below, Reginald emerged into—Street, lighter by forty pounds in pocket, but otherwise not a bit nearer to extricating himself from the incubus of indebtedness which was weighing upon him and crushing him.

At half past five he was with Mr. Solomons. That gentleman, who knew he had got all the ready cash that Reginald could at that instant command, was still affable, but, as Reginald thought, offensively familiar.

"Nothing like punctuality, my young friend, nothing like punctuality. I never like to press a willing horse, but my friend in the City has had a great disappointment. Very large bill—unexpectedly returned yesterday—put him out, I suppose. He said he expected fifty pounds and renew for thirty. I told him I knew you had done the most you could, and he said he would draw for thirty and hold over till the first week in next month and then give you up the bill for ten pounds. I'd some trouble to get him to that, I can assure you. Money's very tight, as you know, Miashter Chesterton, and mine's so locked up that I really can't do the business I might if I'd more capital."

Having thus delivered himself while searching out sundry papers from his table drawer, Mr. Solomons looked up at Reginald, who certainly did not look the better for a late stay at billiards and a sleepless night. He placed a neatly drawn bill at three months, partly filled up on an engraved form, on the table.

"Yes, that's the very best I could do for you, my young friend; but if you prefer to take up the seventy-five after the twenty-ninth he would like it better, as he is calling in money just now."

Reginald saw the meshes of the net, but what was the use of that? He could not take up the bill. He had an amount of accumulating liabilities at what he called "home," and Peggy called "her place," in St. John's Wood. They must be met.

At that instant that confounded nuisance of a clerk rapped at the door communicating from the front office with Mr. Solomons's sanctum.

"Does that fellow never leave?" thought Reginald.

His message solved that question.
"Please, sir, it's six o'clock. Would you be so good as to look at the day-book?"

"Oh, you want to go, do you, Mivens? You see I've been out all day in the City about your business, my dear young friend. Think I've a clue to that Ferrett—think so, mind you—ain't certain. I'll put you on as soon as I can. Excuse me, Mr. Chesterton, but I've not posted up to-day or yesterday, and Mivens has had a long day's work."

Mr. Solomons rose to leave the room.
"Then you'll take up the seventy-five on the first of next month, eh?" added he, turning round.
"Mr. Solomons," said Reginald, "I must really trespass on you for a few moments. I cannot take up the bill due the day after to-morrow. I thought you understood that when I gave you the forty pounds—"

"Ah! but then I understood you had changed your mind, so I was going to give back to my friend in the City the bill he'd drawn at three months for thirty."

"I'll accept that, if you please," said Reginald, "at once."

"And I'll take your I O U for the ten pounds," said Mr. Moss Solomons, resuming his seat with a careless air, and scribbling the body of an I O U, with his own name in the left-hand corner, while the bill already mentioned for the thirty pounds was accepted by Reginald, Reginald also signing the I O U.

"Bless my heart, how forgetful I am," said Mr. Moss Solomons, looking at the bill just accepted, "my friend asked me when he drew this whether he should address you at the Chartered Mercantile, and I told him No: I'd ask you where you would like it presented? Will you oblige me with an address?" added Mr. Solomons.

Reginald was for the instant at a nonplus.
"Oh, Camellia Cottage, St. John's Avenue, St. John's Wood, will do."

Mr. Moss Solomons wrote down the words.
"Thankee, Mr. Chesterton, that will do. I shall see you after the twenty-ninth. Excuse pressure of business. Mivens, you can go. I'll look over the call-book. Good-bye." And Mr. Moss Solomons bowed Reginald out, and parted with him with a cordial shake of the hand.

Among the many improvements in modern London perhaps the most remarkable is that which has swept away in the interest of railway extension, the squalid nests of fever, misery, want and crime which festered and swarmed on the ground rising on each side from the valley of the Fleet Ditch, once a busy estuary of a tidal river and then the mere backwater of a vast cloaca to which the Cloaca Maxima of Imperial Rome was but a kennel or rivulet.

On the sides of the valley, for the first half-mile from the point where

Thy charnels, Fleet! with disembodying streams,
Roll their foul tributaries of dead dogs to Thames.
A fetid sewer than whose no backer mud
With inky stain pollutes the silver flood,

after passing Holborn Bridge, a narrow, filthy alley called Field Lane led from the foot of Holborn Hill into a labyrinth of lanes, courts, some of them cul-de-sac, which surpassed in squalor, crime, poverty, and disease any conception that can be formed by those who have never visited the pest gardens and fever-nests that covered the acres of unfinished arched cellars lately known as "the ruins," but now fast disappearing beneath the lofty warehouses, model lodging-houses, shops, dwellings and factories, and broad streets forming Farringdon Road and its lateral avenues.

The best-known approach to this vile conglomeration of misery and crime was by Field Lane, already mentioned. This was a flag-stoned alley, with a gutter in the middle, with overhanging penthous shops on each side, of the oldest London style, with open fronts and a wicket-door during the day, and closed at night by clumsy, ill-fitting black shutters, sliding in a groove over the bulkhead which formed the place for displaying the wares sold.

These dismal and unsavoury dens, dark even at noonday, were mostly inhabited by the dealers in bandannas (every gentleman and every snob then wore a silk pocket-handkerchief), which, sorted into gay-coloured bunches, fluttered along the shopfront, watched with lynxlike eyes by the dark-eyed sons and daughters of Israel, lest the Artful Dodgers and Charley Bateses, of whom they had for the most part been bought at a tithe of their real value, should slob them a second time and so compel a re-purchase of the twice-stolen "wipe."

The remainder of the shops dealt in the coarsest provisions. Dried fish and dried fish, barrack pork and Irish bacon, shrivelled oranges, windfallen fruits, and stale vegetables seemed to be the pre-

vailing stock-in-trade, while the great and active branch of industry was the "translation" of old shoes and boots, wellingtons and bluchers, which had been worn out by the decent part of the population, into "petter-ash-new," by means of wax, hammer, last, and polish, for the more needy classes. Other shops dealt in "clobbered" clothes, and altogether the whole region, including the slopes of Saffron Hill, chiefly inhabited by Italian lazzarone and their padrones, was the most thickly peopled centre of pauperism and crime that the rich and civilized city of London could boast within its confines.

In a miserable room on the second floor of a dilapidated house, in a narrow street called Chick Lane, running from the end of Field Lane to Cow Cross, but afterwards raised to the dignity of West Street, Smithfield, the cellar part of the tenement being occupied by a "translator of old shoes" and the shop by a vendor of baked potatoes and fried fish, were two men. The one, a red-nosed rascal, now pale and cadaverous, whose most prominent feature had turned to an unwholesome blue, lay stretched on an old tent-bedstead on a heap of dirty bed-clothes, the most distinguishable of which was a bright-coloured horsecloth.

On the back of a broken rush-bottomed chair hung a suit of well-made, excellent clothes all tattered and torn, as if by violence, and smothered with clayey mud.

At a rickety deal table sat a smartly dressed, youngish man of most unmistakably flash appearance. He wore the tight-at-the-knee and small-in-the-calf drab trousers, with a gaiter button at the side of the instep, affected by trainers, horse-dealers and some horsey swells, while his upper man was encased in a Newmarket cut-away, but with capacious pockets on the hips, quite at variance with the more gentlemanly pattern of the garment, the said pockets being a necessary adjunct of the wearer's professional calling. A "loud" waistcoat and a joliffe-shaped hat completed his costume.

Before him, mixed with some bottles of medicine, lint and diachylon plaster, lay a perfect pile of opened post letters, many with enclosures, which from time to time he turned over and made notes from on a ruled sheet of paper and often transferred words and figures from them with a metallic pencil in a small oblong betting-book.

"I'm blessed if these here sporting papers don't get the best of the round arter all," said the tipster, whom we may at once identify as Joe Paget, the trainer, whom we met at Saville House Billiard-rooms and afterwards was one of the party to Epsom. "Ten pound odd to the 'Clipper,' ten pound to 'Tatt's Tissue' and about twelve pound to the 'Life.' They'd have had more of our money only they was so cheeky as to tell me they'd rather not have our advertisements. I've turned up the willer at Sutton, 'cos the postmaster smoked it and wouldn't deliver me no letters addressed to Mr. Heathcote nor Squire Bunbury. Why, the percentages, if we'd paid the winnins, pardner, wouldn't ha' cleared the 'spences.'"

The person on the bed, addressed as "pardner," groaned heavily, then turned on the dirty heap of clothes with a sharp, involuntary cry of pain.

"I'm not satisfied, Joe, that there are no bones broken. Oh! I'm getting worse hourly. I'd rather go into Bartholomew's and chance the consequences than lie here and die in agony."

"The doctors there," replied Joe Paget, gruffly, "can't do no more for you than I can. They know no more o' 'notomy"—Mr. Paget's defective education made him thus style anatomy—"they knows no more o' 'notomy or bone-setting nor I do. I was three year with Jem Deedes, in Lancashire, as set bones better nor any college man as ever walked in shoe-leather, an' he taught me his craft. But I can't think how such a knowin' cove as you was caught napping. You're safe here, but if you'd bin takin' to the hospital, why they'd have just patched you up and handed you over to the police, and then where'd the firm of Eclipse and Pegasus ha' been? Why, nowhere, and, worse nor that, in the stone jug or the House of Detention."

Again the "pardner" groaned and in a feeble voice asked for water.

"No, no, old chap," replied the self-appointed nurse, this time in a cheerful and kindly tone. "Somethin' better nor that, old fellow. Joe Paget don't turn his back on a pal in trouble."

And the speaker went to a little corner cupboard in an angle of the dilapidated apartment.

There stood, in strange keeping with the surrounding squalor, a tinofield champagne bottle, in its rose-coloured tissue paper, some lemons, sugar, three bottles of soda and a half-pint ditto of medicine, with its barred marks for doses.

"No, no, old fellow, no water."

And having deftly sliced a lemon into a large tumbler and laid thereon two or three lumps of

sugar, Mr. Joe Paget pounded them in the fragrant acid and rind with a small glass muller.

"Now then," said he, approaching the bedside of the sufferer with a bottle of soda in his hand, "say when—are you ready?"

"I cannot rise up—oh!" replied the man.

Joe Paget laid down the bottle and, passing one strong arm round his patient, with the other drew a mound of pillow and bedclothes behind his back.

"That's it," said he, as he withdrew his arm from the semi-recumbent sufferer.

He unwired the bottle, then, taking it in his right hand, with his thumb against the cork, and holding the glass with the acidulated syrup in his left, he drew near.

"Ready now?"

"Yes," faintly responded the man.

"Then here you have it."

And pop went the cork to the ceiling. The effervescing contents were transferred to the glass and swallowed with the avidity of a parched pilgrim's first drink at an oasis-fountain in a thirsty desert.

"Thank you," murmured Ephraim Ferrett, sinking back upon the pillow. "You're a trump, Joe, and I'll never forget you."

It was indeed that shifty gentleman. This time his shiftiness had failed for once to save his skin, or even his unworthy carcass from an amount of ill-usage to which ordinary cases of assault and battery were mere child's play. He was one immense bruise from heel to shoulder, not to reckon several scalp wounds and contusions, the utter destruction of a new suit of clothes, the loss of a two-guinea cowhide travelling-bag, some dozen sovereigns, a quantity of silver and a number of cards and documents which, in the ordinary language of advertisements, were "of no use to anybody but the owner."

Why, how and where this disaster occurred and what were its consequences as affecting Reginald Chesterton and his paper shall be told in the next chapter.

(To be continued.)

ANNETTE DELANCY.

CHAPTER II.

EUGENE DE MERVILLE arose at an early hour the next morning, and I cannot conceal the fact that his toilet was made with rather more than his customary care. Annette, too, met him at the breakfast-table upon equal terms, for she was bent upon playing the hostess to her first guest with all due honour to the part she had undertaken. The meal went through merrily, and, that concluded, the good Pierre insisted upon taking De Merville over his farm, while, not to be behindhand in civility, Eugene was lavish in his praises of the turnips, corn, potatoes, and poultry.

With dinner came another chat with Annette, and then an afternoon's shooting. Moonlight and music made a delightful finale to the day, and this may be taken as a sketch of the daily life the young Frenchman led for a brief, delicious period. I ought to add that he very soon found out that Annette was a capital horse woman, and so he speedily challenged her to an exhibition of her equestrian accomplishments, which resulted in a long but not wearisome gallop over many a mile of hill and dale.

Nor was this a solitary excursion, for he appeared to experience a sudden and unaccountable curiosity to visit every picturesque locale in the neighbourhood, and as he was a perfect stranger to the place it was of course very proper for the young lady to do her best to prevent his getting lost in the bye-roads and quiet paths in the vicinity.

Ah! those are very dangerous expeditions for the susceptible. The gallantries of assisting to mount and dismount are so fascinating. I have little fear of a brushing gallop, but when the horses and their riders are tired of hard galloping, when the soothing twilight hour is approaching and the steeds instinctively approach each other and the ear is inclined, that the regular beat of the hoof may not interrupt the conversation, that conversation is apt to take a very interesting turn, and afterwards, when the welcome home is reached, the hand of the cavalier is very apt to grasp the fair fingers of his companion as he assists her from the saddle with a more than necessary pressure, and how can those fair fingers be withdrawn without imminent peril to the lady? Believe me, love seats himself as often in the saddle as on the fautenil, and I am not sure but he ought to be depicted as a diminutive jockey, with top-boots and a beautiful little riding-whip.

But this is a digression.

Then there were rambles after wild-flowers in the pleasant glades of the woodland, which possessed even a greater charm for Eugene than the more active excursions on horseback. And did this unchecked intimacy continue without any detriment to

Annette's peace of mind? Was the form and memory of Eugene de Merville to pass away like the image of a dream dispelled by the events of the succeeding day?

The time approached which was to test the state of her feelings towards him. One morning he returned from Bondy, whither he had ridden unaccompanied, with a grave countenance.

He briefly informed Madame Beauchamp that he had received news of the illness of his father, which made it necessary for him to return home without delay.

He inquired for Annette, and was informed that she was in a little summer-house in the garden. Thither the young man bent his footsteps.

He found her seated at a table, on which lay a small volume, open, but not engrossing her attention, for she was apparently absorbed in reverie.

The sound of his step aroused her, and she looked up with a pleasant smile, that disappeared as she observed the melancholy and embarrassment of his expression.

"Pardon me, M. de Merville," she said, commencing the conversation, "but you rode over to Bondy to obtain intelligence from home; I trust it was satisfactory?"

"So far from it," replied Eugene, "that it is of a character which commands my immediate attention; which imposes on me the painful necessity of bidding you an abrupt adieu. My father is alarmingly ill; the letter which conveys the unwelcome information is written by his steward."

"Indeed! I am pained to hear this, and sincerely hope you may find him better than you appear to anticipate."

"Hardly so, I am afraid. His health has suffered such repeated shocks, I fear he cannot sustain another severe attack of disease. He has never been well since the death of my mother. Ah! Mademoiselle Beauchamp, when the object of a life-long attachment is suddenly torn from it the heart must indeed be cold which can survive the shock. Inheriting the feelings of my father, I can foreshadow my own fate in such an event. Even now, in parting, for a brief space, from one whom I respect—admire—love, hear me, Mademoiselle Beauchamp—love—yes, love devoutly—"

Annette averted her eyes from that gaze of melancholy, passionate devotion.

"Annette! Mademoiselle Beauchamp, pardon me," sinking beside her, and taking her passive hand in his, "pardon me, if I have dared to avow hopes which my looks must have interpreted long ago. But my soul is above disguise, and I could not leave you in this, my bitter hour of woeful presage and affliction, without confessing all I felt—all I dared to hope, and learning from you my doom or my happier destiny."

"M. de Merville," murmured Annette, but her voice was choked, her bosom heaved, and she sobbed bitterly.

"Gracious Heaven! I have deeply offended you!" cried the young man. "I have misinterpreted your kindness to a chance acquaintance, and outraged your feelings. If so, again I ask your pardon, and will bid you a respectful adieu."

But the hand which he again pressed was not withdrawn—the eyes, fearful but beautiful, were lifted to his face with the firm confidence of innocence.

"M. de Merville," she said, "I am not insensible of your kindness. But I am, if not friendless, poor—my very parentage unknown—a nameless orphan, dependent upon strangers. You are well born ah! how little do the high and well born prize their advantages—you move in a circle of society to whom I cannot, to which I do not wish to aspire. Your father—will he sanction your addresses if I possessed a right to smile upon them?"

"Annette," replied Eugene, as he stole his arm around her waist, "my noble father loves me—prizes me far—far indeed beyond my poor deserts. He would sacrifice life itself to forward my views. In early life he consented to part with me that I might obtain the best education the metropolis could afford. He surrounded me with all that was pure in morality and beautiful in art—he guarded me from the contamination of evil companions and evil principles, and, having taught me to think and act for myself, he left me to my own judgment to learn the great lesson of life. He did not teach me to avoid love—for he told me that it was a high and holy passion—but he taught me what to appreciate and approach in the fairer sex. In this secluded place I have found the beauty, the virtue, the true cultivation which I sought for in vain in the glittering halls of our gay capital. I have but to tell him that the ideal is found to win his approving, alas! perhaps his dying smile. Permit me to tell him that the ideal is won."

And Annette was his. In the first warm kiss he

imprinted tenderly and tremblingly upon her the confirmation of his warmest wildest dreams come to his enthusiastic spirit. It is not for us to pause by that consecrated bower, to catch the pure accents of that affection sanctified by mutual trust in each other's hearts, and reliance on an overruling Providence. Young lover! tearfully yet trustfully leave the side of the cherished one. "Thy foot is on the stirrup, and thy hand is on the rein," but thou lingerest to catch the last glimpse of her receding figure, the last wave of her mute but eloquent salute.

Now ride forth. The charm and the spell are on thee. The halls to which thou art hastening may echo the lamentation of devoted attachment bereaved of its object, thou mayest tread their sounding corridors their orphan master, the lips which have blessed thee "many a time and oft" may be chill and silent now, and the silver hairs thou hast so often viewed with reverence may wave in the light-some wind above the pall of death, but thou bearest within thy bosom that charm which will assuage the bitter poignancy of this thy first great sorrow.

Thou mayest not think of her—the loved one—standing beside the coffin in the funeral hall, or mournfully tracking the remains of what was chivalrous, high-souled, and daring, lovely in life and beautiful in death, in their solemn progress to the final home; but when the night has passed, and the "morrow cometh," when the memory of the lost is "like the music of other days," thou wilt rise from thy affliction, chastened, but not confounded, and while remembering that there is one more to plead for thee in Heaven, thou wilt not forget that even on the earth thou art not lonely.

CHAPTER III.

Rap! rap! rap!
"Hilloa! open the door, there, if you're alive! D'ye hear, within there?"

Rap! rap! rap!
These gentle salutations were addressed to the door and inmates of the farm, towards the middle of a stormy night some time after the departure of Eugene from Bondy. The thunder was pealing wildly overhead, the lightning glared incessantly, and the huge oaks of the forest groaned and tossed their gnarled arms abroad as the winds roared through them in the height of a tempestuous gale.

"What do you want?" shouted Pierre Beauchamp, in a voice that rose above the elemental warfare, as he thrust his night-capped head from the window of his dormitory.

"What do I want? Let me in first, and I'll tell you what I want afterwards. Be quiet, you noisy rascal!"

The latter exclamation was addressed to the surly mastiff, who was tugging at his chain, and howling most vociferously.

"In a moment," answered the farmer, and, stopping a brief space to improve his personal appearance, he descended the stairs and unbarricaded the door, shielding his lamp from the furious gusts which threatened to extinguish it.

"Come at last!" replied the midnight visitor. "Well, bear's hand here. My master's carriage has upset, the horses are playing wild with the harness, and I'm afraid the marquis is hurt."

Beauchamp followed the stranger, and soon came to the debris of a carriage, near which lay a man apparently insensible, whom he assisted to carry into the house. The farm servants had now assembled, and while some ran to secure the horses, others lighted a fire, and the blaze that shot up the huge chimney disclosed an elegantly dressed and fashionable youth, whose pallid features gave signs of returning consciousness.

"Lacaille!" muttered the stranger.

"I'm with you, monsieur," replied the valet. "Are you in pain?"

"This arm," murmured the wounded man—"it's excruciating. Send or go for a surgeon. But tell me—where am I?"

"In good hands, sir," replied the honest farmer. "Lie still, and you shall have attendance instantly. Jacques, saddle my best horse, and ride to Dr. Flewry's instantly."

The stranger closed his eyes and sank back on the sofa.

"We shall make it worth your while," said the valet, consequently. "The Marquis de Mirafleur never fails to requite a service. Got us a drop of brandy, my good bourgeois, and that as speedily as your very substantial pair of supporters will permit you."

Pierre Beauchamp frowned on the insolent servant as he followed his direction.

A few drops of the liquor revived the marquis, who opened his eyes again.

"Lacaille, this is annoying! I'm afraid this acci-

dent will detain me here some time. 'Tis always my deuced luck—fortune cogs the dice."

"Be thankful, monsieur, to Providence that your life was spared," observed the farmer.

The marquis opened his eyes very wide.

"Lacaille," he said, languidly, "he preaches!"

"How very good!" exclaimed the valet. "One would think," he added to himself, "that the shock had knocked the affectation out of him. But second nature—humph!"

"Lacaille!" drawled out the nobleman. "Get my trunks, etc., out of the carriage. One must be decent even if one is at the point of death. I shall look frightfully pale to-morrow, but of course there will be no belle dame to captivate. Eh! my good man?"

"You may spare yourself the trouble, monsieur," replied the farmer, drily.

"Rather spare me your wit," rejoined the marquis.

"Lacaille, he is sarcastic! Remove him—he is nauseous."

"My presence shan't annoy you," said the sturdy farmer. "As soon as I have given orders for your comfort, I shall leave you to the congenial society of your valet."

"Congenial society!" repeated the marquis, keeping up his affected style of speaking, even though writhing with pain. "The man is a degree above the vulgar in his language."

And, in truth, the refinement of Annette was not without some effect, even on her rustic entertainers.

In due time the man of skill arrived. He was fat and flurried, with a huge snuff-box, and a huge box of instruments. Both of these he opened, the former for a pinch, and the latter to strike the surrounding servants with horror and astonishment.

"Let me look at the arm!" he cried. "Aha! looks bad—feels bad—bad case—very formidable. Pulse—ha! feverish. Bad symptoms. Never mind. Blec! him. Ounce of blood—pound of cure—that's the way with Dr. Flewry."

Notwithstanding this discouraging commencement, the worthy surgeon discovered that the extent of the injury sustained by the noble marquis was comprised in a few severe bruises and sprains, though he secretly determined that he should undergo a long confinement, saying to himself, as, after discharging the duties of his office, he slowly rolled away in his heavy, old-fashioned chaise:

"Good job—good job. Young nobleman—bled him well—pure and person. Too much blood, too much money. Frighten him, and so forth. New coat for self, and new bonnet for madame. Six weeks' job at quickest time. Ha! ha! very good!"

But Dr. Flewry, like many other disinterested persons of his stamp, was building castles in Spain, without a sure foundation, as he discovered the very next morning, when the marquis, feeling himself much refreshed by a good night's rest, for which he was perhaps indebted by the surgeon's anodynes, not only declared himself able to get along without the assistance of the Esculapius, but, moreover, peremptorily dismissed that learned leech with a single fee, and the consolatory reflection that those whom the gods would destroy, they first make mad. Toward dinner-time the distinguished guest actually insisted upon making his toilet, and even on going downstairs and presenting himself to the family, leaning on the sturdy arm of his affectionate and devoted valet. The latter had unconsciously induced this effort by a glowing description of the personal attractions of the daughter of their host. He was struck with the beauty of the young lady, and his salutation, polished and easy, was likewise respectful for the Marquis of Mirafleur.

"Mademoiselle," said he, after a few minutes' conversation, in which the vivacity, intelligence and politeness of the lady made a strong impression, "if anything could reconcile me to an absence from Paris it would be the pleasure of meeting such elegance among these benighted passants. In fact, I consider the pleasure of being acquainted with you cheaply earned at the expense of a few bruises and a broken carriage."

Annette, not much pleased with the present manner of the marquis, made a cool and careless answer, which showed how much she was displeased and disconcerted with his hyperbolic tone of flattery.

"It is a thousand pities," cried the marquis, "that you do not live in dear, delightful Paris. On the word of a nobleman, you would create quite a sensation there. One half the beau monde would teaze you with their adoration, and the other half would wish you—at Bondy."

"Where I am contented, M. le Marquis, even without listening to those high-flown compliments which, as somebody says, you fine gentlemen think it necessary to provide yourselves with for your intercourse with us poor country girls, just as traders carry

beads and trinkets to the savages. But I am a very peculiar savage myself, and prefer the pure ore of truth to its lacquered and Dutch-gilt representative, flattery."

"But, mademoiselle, the latter is the current coin."

"And you gentlemen, like modern bankers, with a little stock of the pure gold of sincerity, issue promises and praises as plentifully as billets de banque."

"Mademoiselle is too severe. I, too, albeit a follower of fashion, should have worshipped sincerity all my life, if she had presented herself in the form of a goddess. Perhaps I may yet renounce my former faith."

"Sudden proselytes are rarely true believers."

"Not when they are converted by a miracle."

As the last rejoinder was not responded to by Annette, who was shortly after called away, Mirafleur contented himself with the appliances of Lacaille.

"Come hither, coquin," said the master. "You know, my good fellow, that, following the customs of my ancestors, the ancient noblesse, the porcelain clay of our belle France, I have made you more of a companion than a valet. Now, in your capacity of confidant and confidant, I will impart to you a piece of news."

"I am all attention, my lord."

"Lacaille, as this hand is disabled for the present you may imagine it placed upon my heart in token of sincerity. I am in love!"

"For the ninety-ninth time. Do you call this news my lord?"

"Lacaille! you will be pleased to attempt no pleasantry. I repeat it: I am in love. What shall I do?"

"Oh! propose, of course, my lord. Break off matters with the duchess, sell your stud and your hotel, and on the wrecks of your property sit down for life with mademoiselle here, in the corner of a farm house. Ha! ha! But perhaps after all, it may not be so bad. The lady may refuse you."

"Refuse me, the conqueror—me, the observed of all observers. Lacaille, you compel me to smile. Refuse me? never named by patronymic, Julio de Mirafleur, but the marquis par excellence. 'Tis absurd."

"My dear master, do give up this heretic scheme," cried the devoted valet, in tones of deep affection. "Don't—pray don't marry her—if it's only to oblige me, sir."

"Calm yourself, my dear. I give you my word and honour that I will not. But we must try the force of our attractions, Lacaille; we are positively piqued to do it. We must be beloved by the peasant."

And accordingly, not to dwell upon the heartlessness and affectation of the marquis, he devoted himself to the task of pleasing the young lady, and he certainly succeeded.

Dropping in her presence, the tone of frivolity and frigid foppishness he commonly adopted to his inferiors, he introduced different topics calculated to display his knowledge of the world, in its various aspects, to the best advantage.

He described the countries he had visited, the works of art he had seen, and criticised the popular music, poetry, and painting in a style which showed him a perfect connoisseur.

But Annette was only amused, and the only sensation he awakened was that of pity that one so brilliant, witty and accomplished should live without any honorable aim, lost to every object but the amusement of the hour.

When he thought her properly prepared, after a few days' display of his knowledge, elegance and person, he seized a favourable opportunity to disclose his passion.

Lacaille was wandering in the garden, discontented and alone, wondering how long the infatuation of his master would endure, mourning his own total destitution of excitement, and casting many wistful glances in the direction of Paris, the cynosure of his eyes, when he heard his name called. He was astounded, not at the unexpected call, but at the harsh tone, the fiery glance, the flushed face of his master, commonly so impassive a shield to the emotions of his heart, so

"Well skilled to hide

All, save unutterable pride,"

"Lacaille," he said, in short, stern accents, "get our horses ready instantly. I am going to Paris."

"To Paris, my lord?"

"To Paris, sir! Why does the idiot stand gaping there! Don't detain me ten minutes. It shall cost you your place to do so."

And with these words he strode to and fro in the garden while Lacaille left him to execute his orders.

So soon as the rattle of wheels was heard he entered the house and sought out the farmer.

"My good man," said he, haughtily, "you have done well by me, but not, doubtless, without the hope of recompense. Here is my purse."

But Pierre drew himself proudly up.

"I am no hireling, my lord, not petty innkeeper. He who crosses my threshold is my guest, and the unfortunate are my friends. Put up your purse; I will not touch a franc."

"As you will, sir," replied the marquis, coolly. "I shall find some means to requite your hospitality."

Lacaille held the steps of the carriage—the young nobleman sprang to his seat. The steps were put up, the door closed, Lacaille climbed to the box, and away flew the carriage.

Ten miles had passed rapidly away before they stopped at a post-house.

Lacaille again presented himself at the door of the carriage.

"Will you alight, monsieur?"

"No; stay here awhile 'till those busy brutes are a little farther off. Lacaille, she rejected me!"

"Is it possible!" cried the valet.

"Hear me!" cried the nobleman. "I will have revenge!"

"You shall have it, monsieur," cried the supple valet. "I promise my assistance, and I never failed you yet."

A ghastly smile convulsed the features of the marquis as he folded his arms and fell back in his seat.

"Drive on!" cried Lacaille to the coachman, as he sprang to the box. "To Paris—to Paris!"

CHAPTER IV.

"WHAT have you brought from Bondy for me, father?" was Annette's address to Pierre Boudchamp, as the latter returned from a ride to town one morning.

"No letter, my poor child," replied the farmer, "but a little piece of news. At the 'Lion d'Or' I heard a lady, who came in a fine carriage, inquiring for this very place, and for yourself, too, my child. So, thinks I to myself, after I had heard the direction given, I'll get into the saddle and spur home through the forest, for my dame and Annette mustn't be taken by surprise."

Scarcely were the words uttered when, amidst the cracking of a postilion's whip, a carriage rolled up to the door, and an aged lady, in deep mourning, was assisted to alight.

She appeared labouring under the combined effects of fatigue and agitation, and it was some time before the venerable visitor could regain composure enough to make herself heard and understood.

"Mademoiselle Delancy," said she at length, "I am the bearer of unwelcome intelligence—intelligence which concerns yourself, mademoiselle, deeply. My heart tells me whom I am addressing, and by the same instinct you may divine whence messenger I am. Alas! mademoiselle, I would the task of informing you of what has happened had fallen into other hands. I am the aunt of Eugene de Merville."

At that name the blood forsook the countenance of Annette. She closed her eyes, and a deadly tremor seemed to take possession of her limbs. But she nerved herself.

"Speak on, madame," she said, taking her aged visitor by the hand, "I will make an effort to command myself."

"You may have heard," said Madame Ferrier, "that Eugene has lost his father."

"I feared as much," was the reply.

"Grief at this event almost drove him distracted. He sought Paris to attend to some affairs which commanded his attention, and there was taken ill, at my house. In his moments of delirium, as well as in his lucid intervals, he has spoken incessantly of you. My dear young lady, you have now to hear the worst. He is given up by the physicians, and would you close his dying eyes, you must hasten with me to Paris."

It was no time to indulge in passionate lamentation, but with a heart overcharged with grief, stunned and bewildered at the suddenness of the stroke which had fallen on her, Annette prepared to accompany Madame Ferrier. The latter required a little rest, but in an incredibly short space of time she announced her readiness to recommence her journey. A brief farewell was all Annette could utter, as, through tearful eyes, she watched the misty trees and receding chimneys of her late happy home.

Magnificent Paris! what gay crowds are loitering in thy illuminated gardens, wandering on thy spacious boulevards, or by thy starlit Seine spanned with the lofty bridges, whose lights dim-twinkled on the tremulous tide; what happy, buoyant forms whirled in the ringing dance, in hundreds of thy

bright saloons; what brilliant revelry sent up its shouts from the wine-cup and the wassail, as the carriages of our mourners rolled through a sudden gateway over the pavements, to the hotel of Madame Ferrier. This was an old building in the Faubourg St. Germain, full of the bygone grandeur of a decayed line. A gloomy entrance admitted the carriage to a dimly-lighted courtyard. All was still, decent and aristocratic about that melancholy household.

They alighted, and were shown by a manservant up a pair of stairs, into a luxuriously furnished sitting-room. Here Annette was left alone for a few minutes, while the old lady went to inquire after her nephew. She instantly returned, saying that he was awake and, falling rapidly, requested to behold Annette without a moment's delay. Poor Annette dried her fast-falling tears, and followed her weeping conductress to the sick chamber. Madame Ferrier withdrew as her companion entered. The room was dimly lighted—a muffled figure lay upon a sofa. As the door closed, the figure started up, and the ample cloak fell from the shoulders, and as Annette gazed with horror on the countenance, she recognized the Marquis de Mirafleur!

CHAPTER V.

AN elegantly dressed young man was reclining carelessly in his seat at the opera, eyeing the attitudes of the reigning danseuse, the Tagliat of the day, through his gold-mounted lorgnette, when he heard his name pronounced in a low voice.

"M. de Mirafleur, a word with you."

The speaker was a pale young man, of a fiery and decided cast of countenance, and dressed in a suit of the deepest mourning.

The marquis neither started nor turned pale, but his eye flashed less brightly than it had done a moment previously as it rested on the well-known features of De Merville.

"I little anticipated the pleasure of seeing you here," said the marquis.

"It is no very pleasant occurrence, monsieur, that leads me to visit a place like this in my days of mourning. But I know you were here, and that you could not avoid me if you would."

"Avoid you, De Merville," answered the marquis, haughtily, "let me tell you I am easily found by friend and foe. You assume the tone of the latter. How is this?"

"I will tell you briefly, I have just returned from Bondy. Marquis de Mirafleur, I know the imposition practised. By Heaven! you turn pale. A young girl—a young, lovely, virtuous girl, has been seduced from the roof of her protectors by the practices of a villain."

"What is that to me?"

"Everything. I am aware of your visit to that place—of your rejection by Annette. Can you tell me that you have not seen her since—that you did not authorize the imposition I allude to?"

The marquis was silent. At length he said, with forced composure:

"What rights have you to question me?"

"The right of her affianced lover. Did you, or did you not, practise on her credulity?"

Thrice the marquis attempted to speak, but the words, like Macbeth's amen, stuck in his throat. At length he faltered out, with blanched lips, and a quailing eye:

"I did not."

The eyes of De Merville blazed with indignation. Bending his head, and approaching his lips to the ear of his foe, he applied to him an epithet which no Frenchman—a gentleman! can bear without resentment.

"Enough," said the marquis, springing up, and shaking off every appearance of lethargy or irresolution, "I could have spared you what must follow, but you have thrown the dice. I retract the denial I just now made. Hear me, and let it half atone the insult you have offered. She is mine—mine wholly. And mark me—to-morrow—at the hour of sunrise—in the Bois de Boulogne, near the old gray cross, I will attend you. Lacaille shall be with me as witness, and you may bring any friend you like. I name pistols. And now, as you are bent on going—a revolver—for my part, I shall stay the ballet."

De Merville wound his way to the dwelling of an old friend, Captain Ruder, who had served in the imperial army, to whom he imparted the intelligence of the proposed meeting, and a request that he would go out with him.

"Of course, of course, my friend," replied the captain, "with the greatest pleasure. I wish, however, there was a little more formality in the proceedings, as it is likely to be a serious affair, it being obligatory on you to kill M. le Marquis. Mais l'importe. 'Tis very well as it is. But come, you are cast down. You have lost a mistress—'tis the fortune of war. He has gained one—the luck is his if

to survive your fire. Have you ever done much in this way before?"

"Never," replied De Merville, "but I shoot differently well."

"Am at the highest vital spot—the pistol has a tendency to droop—little danger of swerving to the right or left. I shall make you both fire at the word—the chances will be equal. And now—I have some excellent burgundy."

"Pardon me," replied De Merville, "I am the worst boon companion in existence, Ruder. Get me pen and ink, and while I write you can amuse yourself, and your chansons à boire will not disturb me in the least."

His wish was complied with, and while Ruder passed the night as he had many a night before battle, though in more boisterous company, De Merville had written various letters, and prepared himself for the morrow. Scrupulous he had none, for he was acting a part that custom and the tone of good society in France sanctioned as olivaceous and honourable. It is not for us to judge him by our own purer code.

Cool and bracing was the air through which the gentlemen drove rapidly to the rendezvous in the Bois de Boulogne. Ruder selected a convenient spot with an experienced eye, and was expatiating on its merits to his friend when a filibury drove up, and from it descended the marquis, and Lacaille with a case of pistols.

The sight of his enemy strengthened the deadly resolution of Eugene, while the marquis derived no particular inspiration from the presence of his adversary. The parties took their places, and the pistols were placed in their hands. Ruder stepped out of the line of fire, and, raising his voice to a stern shout, gave the signal. The explosions were simultaneous. As the smoke curled upward De Merville remained at his post, but Julio, Marquis de Miradour, stretched his length upon the sod.

"It's all over," said Lacaille, supporting the marquis on his knees, while Ruder and De Merville rushed to the wounded man.

"De Merville," murmured the marquis; "take my hand. I have been punished rightly. I attempted to deprive you of Annette. But I found her firm and incorruptible. On the honour of a dying man, she escaped from my toils unharmed. As for me, my race is run. Could I live—it might be that repentance—a different life."

The blood gushed from his lips, and he expired. Ruder examined his wound.

"Why didn't you bring a surgeon?" cried De Merville.

"Ay, he must have a surgeon," muttered Ruder, "and that speedily. Get him to Paris with despatch," he added, to Lacaille. "As for you, M. de Merville, I need scarcely recommend a speedy departure from this charming capital. For myself, I can hide in Paris, where it would not be convenient for you to bivaque."

Eugene assented to the justice of his remarks, and, taking leave of the captain, was soon en route for Bondy, at which place he hoped to set pursuit on foot after the fugitive Annette. As he approached the scene of so much happiness and so much disappointment tears rose to his eyes and he vainly endeavoured to conquer his painful emotions. The roof that sheltered her, the flowers she loved and cherished, the rustic summer-house in which she heard with smiles and tears the story of his love—the sign of these objects, increased the oppression of heart under which he laboured. But all was not lost, perhaps—not utterly. He sprang from the chaise, rushed into the house, and the next instant held Annette to his heart.

The period of her trials was ended—that of her happiness to come. She had escaped from the toils that had been laid for her, and she had just been apprised of a piece of unexpected good fortune. Madame Bonand having met with a series of misfortunes, among which the heaviest was the elopement and subsequent death of her daughter, Juliette, regarded these afflictions as a punishment sent expressly by Heaven, in consequence of the deception practised on Annette; therefore, when fully persuaded that she was on her death bed, she confessed her fraud, and made restitution of the stolen property to the young lady, who now assumed her rightful name. She sighed when De Merville informed her of the duel, and though she forbore to reproach him for his conduct she exacted a solemn promise that he would never more seek that method of avenging an insult or an injury.

In a few days intelligence arrived from Paris that Miradour was pronounced out of danger, and that De Merville might return openly as soon as he desired. The marriage of the lovers took place at the farm house, to the intense delight of Pierre Beauchamp, who passed the evening of the happy day in a state of riotous excitement, and was as much of a maniac as when Annette first met him on her first event-

ful journey. The day after, the young pair took leave of their rustic but faithful friends, and entered a splendid carriage destined to whirl them to the capital. Of the gaieties of their life during their sojourn in that brilliant metropolis we do not now intend to write.

They met De Miradour a graver and a better man. The resolutions he had formed during his confinement were faithfully adhered to after his convalescence; his fortunes were improved by the change, and that he was no less fascinating as a moral man than a roué, was soon discovered by the success of his addresses to one of the most beautiful, wealthy, and virtuous ladies in Paris. Long before his marriage, he parted with Lacaille; or, to speak more properly, Lacaille, suspecting that the marquis was meditating his discharge, begged to be relieved from further service, because, like a Snake, he "lived by the badness of his character," and, were it imagined that he had adopted the new principles of his master, "he should lose every friend he had in the world,"

F. A. C.

DISCOURAGEMENT.

THERE is always a way out of discouragement. Conviction that our course is right, constancy of purpose, an invincible determination never to submit or yield and a calm reliance on Providence may sustain us in a lofty attitude. If we will wait with patience for the element of time to help in our affairs the difficulties may disappear of themselves and we may find a clear path where we had anticipated only insurmountable obstacles.

Of all things, when the mood of discouragement overtakes one he should think of anything and everything else than his own trouble, and, more than this, should take measures of time to follow new currents of thought and feeling. Sometimes the mood is purely the result of bodily conditions, and requires for its cure sleep, or exercise in the open air, or a change of diet or a simply waiting till it passes away of itself. When it springs from causes not connected with the body, then the cause must be spiritual or intellectual. An intensely interesting novel, constant intercourse with fresh minds, change of scene, travel, the study of a science new to the patient, anything that will absorb the brain and keep it from consuming itself, is good medicine.

VIVIAN AND BRENDA.

On a beautiful afternoon in the month of August, Vivian Barton and his cousin, Brenda Howard, were riding on horseback along a shady country road.

At the time our story opens they had reached an eminence which commanded a splendid view of the surrounding scenery, crowned by the gorgeous sunset.

Their figures seemed to complete the scene. Brenda, sitting gracefully upon the back of a fine sorrel, was habited in green of a becoming shade. She was not one of those grand, magnificent creatures that sometimes cross our paths and linger in memory; but still she was very lovely, and her person bespoke elegance.

You could not have called her a decided blonde, for her hair was of a light shade of chestnut, falling in rich ringlets around her neck. In her manner she was sweet and gentle, and when she turned her soft blue eyes upon Vivian, and her lips parted in a winning smile, he felt that few girls could compare with his boyhood's love.

Vivian himself presented a fine, manly appearance; his countenance was intelligent and expressive, with a resolute mouth, and when he laughed he revealed a splendid set of teeth. He, too, was at home in the saddle.

Brenda and Vivian were together again for the first time in several years, both having spent the intervening period at school—Vivian at a university. Vivian had chosen the profession of the law, and, having completed his studies, had now returned to the scenes of his boyhood.

Brenda was now an accomplished young lady, beloved by all, and attractive beyond the promise of her childhood. When the pair parted she was a romping girl, with a gay and laughing disposition, and of such a character as to win the admiration of our hero.

It was quite observable that these two, as children, were very fond of each other, and it did not escape the notice of Mr. Howard, Brenda's father; but children always outgrow early attachments, he argued, and of course these young folks would not prove an exception to the rule. So he gave himself no concern about the matter.

A few evenings before the ride of which I have spoken their first meeting had taken place in the dining-room at "Glen Albion." They soon fell into their former habits of intimacy, and Vivian began to regard his gentle cousin as the guardian spirit of his

uncle's household, and a deeper tenderness vibrated in his heart than had ever been excited by his earlier affection for her.

In the description introducing my hero and heroine to the attention of the reader I remarked that they were on an eminence which afforded a glorious view of the landscape and the sunset.

Vivian touched his cousin's arm and drew his own rein, and they drank in the splendour of the scene together.

Thus absorbed, silence prevailed for some moments. It was broken at last by Vivian, who, turning to his companion, said, in words of low and tender music:

"Brenda, it distresses me beyond the power of language to describe to realize that we are no longer children, and to feel that the impression made upon my heart by your girlish charms years ago seems now to be increasing to a deeper and stronger sense of your loveliness and grace. Pardon me if my confession saddens you, but I love you, Brenda, with the purest and holiest sentiments of my heart, and I feel that without you my life will be a hopeless future of sadness and gloom. Had I never seen you as I now behold you, time might perhaps have erased from memory the tender associations of the past with which you are connected; but now I feel that the impression of your loveliness can never fade from my mind."

As he concluded he saw a tear stand on her eyelash, and in the silence which followed the sun sank down behind the mountains, and they turned their horses' heads mechanically, and began to descend the hill which led to the old village church and graveyard.

Sorrow was in the heart of Brenda; the saddest moments of her past life were upon her. She loved Vivian Barton as he dearly loved her. Now he had told her in his own manly terms how sincerely he loved her, and how hopeless his life must be unless he could feel that one day she might be his wife. But, alas for both! With this realization came a new view of the insurmountable impediment to the consummation of their early dreams.

They knew that Mr. Howard disapproved of marriage between cousins. No word had escaped either to indicate that this common consciousness was uppermost in their minds, but each divined the other's thoughts; so in silence they proceeded.

The harvest moon was rising like a conflagration in the east, as the lovers, nursing their reflections, approached the iron gate of the old graveyard.

The old church was built of brick, and in its time had numbered some curious characters among its congregations. Standing to the right, the road passed through the churchyard within a few feet.

Deeply rooted in the minds of the plain folks in that part of the country there were some ghostly legends; and on bad nights, when the storm raged without, and the men were collected around the fire at the village inn, some were heard to say that they never liked to pass through the churchyard at night; and one man asserted that he had heard very strange noises in the old vestry room just as the sun was declining, when he was going home from work. It was a common saying that no one cared to pass that way at night, and even a horse pricked his ears in the solemn shades.

What amount of truth there may have been in these stories it is not my purpose to discuss, and it does not matter in this narrative. But when Brenda and Vivian crossed the gateway and entered into the gloomy shadows their minds were running a little on these graveyard legends, many of which they had been familiar with from early childhood.

They rode silently along; everything was solemn and quiet; the tall old cedars stood up in their silent dignity, and the evening air was filled with the fragrance of the woodbine and sweetbrier.

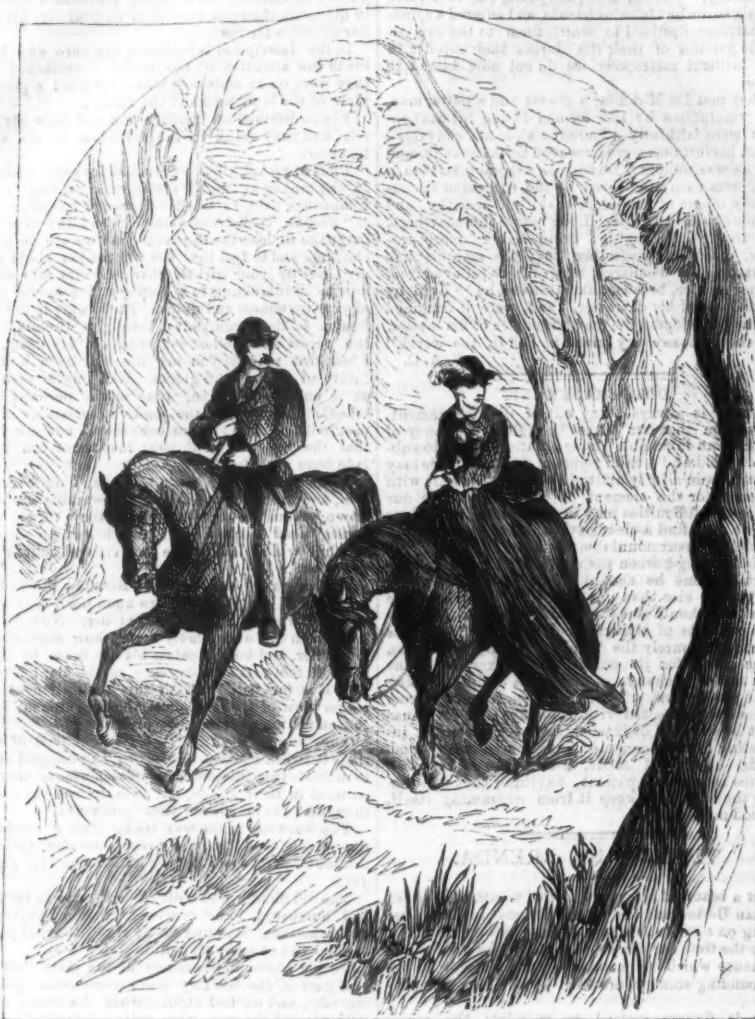
Suddenly Brenda's horse trembled and snorted, and, making one tremendous spring, dashed off at lightning speed, with the terrified girl clinging to his mane. In one instant, and before Vivian could recover from the momentary shock, horse and rider were out of sight.

Quickly realizing the position in which he was placed, the young man dashed his spurs into the flanks of his own spirited animal and started in pursuit, in the hope of overtaking his precious charge, his soul filled with apprehension and dread for the fate of his cousin.

At Mr. Howard's outer gate he found Brenda lying on the ground, but the horse was nowhere to be seen.

The poor fellow knelt by the side of the prostrate girl and culled her by her name; but she did not answer. In great distress, he took her gently in his arms and moved toward the house.

Dr. Wilson was the popular physician of St. Mary's parish, and had married the ward of Mr. Howard, creating a family connection which both of the gentlemen found it agreeable to cultivate, establishing



[THE EVENING RIDE.]

thereby a warm friendship, so that the doctor always called at Mr. Howard's whenever he was attending a patient in the neighbourhood.

It so happened that at the moment when Brenda's horse threw her off as he leaped to clear the fence at the gate Dr. Wilton was on the verandah with her father.

The attention of both gentlemen was attracted by the riderless horse of Brenda tearing towards the house. Without stopping to secure the animal they sprang into the doctor's gig and drove rapidly in the direction whence the horse had come, and were just ascending a slight declivity near the gate when they perceived Vivian with his charge approaching them.

Doctor Wilton drew in his horse, and Mr. Howard, jumping out of the carriage, said:

"Vivian, is my daughter hurt?"

"I fear, sir, that she is."

"I hope, sir," said Mr. Howard, coldly, "this will teach you in the future not to race horses with which you are not perfectly familiar."

Dr. Wilton made a brief examination of the wounds of the sufferer and directed the father to convey her as gently as possible to the house.

When the gig containing the distressed father and his child started Vivian held back and was much inclined to indulge in his own sad reflections, but the amiable doctor had already opened his heart in sympathy for him, and now, taking him by the arm, said:

"Come, Mr. Barton, cheer up, sir. I hope the case does not justify your serious mood."

The doctor and Vivian walked rapidly to the house, keeping a pretty even pace with the gig.

At the house the commotion which is usual upon the occasion of an accident followed, and Vivian lingered near Brenda's room, in the hope that some word to encourage his sad heart might fall from the kindhearted doctor.

But he could only inform our hero that she had recovered from her swoon and that nothing positive concerning her state could be ascertained before morning.

Vivian spent a cheerless, heavy night, and early the next morning sought his uncle, to assure him that he had not been the cause of Brenda's accident, explaining just how it occurred.

Mr. Howard apologized for his hasty words and told Vivian that his daughter was much better, her injuries proving slight and now, with quiet and repose, she would do very well in a few days.

This report soothed Vivian's feelings in a great degree, but still the day dragged along sorrowfully enough.

On the morning of the second day after the accident above described the good old vicar called on Mr. Howard to inquire after Miss Brenda and to give the following note into her father's hand:

"DEAR UNCLE,—I love Cousin Brenda just as you loved Aunt Bertha when you were united in the holy bonds of marriage. Knowing, as I have known from our early childhood, the settled aversion that both you and Aunt Bertha entertain to the marriage of first cousins, I feel the utter hopelessness of my passion for my cousin and seek to banish those unhappy feelings from my heart by foreign travel. Ere this reaches you I shall be on my way to distant scenes, and my return is likely, I fear, to be long delayed. I am, with deep affection for you all,

"Your nephew,

"VIVIAN BARTON."

Mr. Howard was not a little amazed when he perused these lines, and Vivian's short epistle awakened in his mind a volume of thought. He may have been rash in pronouncing the edict against the marriage of near relations, but had he not had cause to do so since he led his own beautiful cousin from the altar a bride?

Three sons had been borne him, but only one ever called him "father;" that one never stood upon his feet, but, after causing a long warfare of hope and despair in his father's breast, had been laid by the others in the old churchyard.

Mr. Howard had resolved to save his child from the bitter experience he and his wife had known in this respect, and this resolution might have strengthened with time; but Doctor Wilton, too, had an opinion on the subject, and if there was one man inclined to have confidence in the opinions of another that man was Mr. Howard.

Dr. Wilton had expressed the idea, after going carefully over a great deal of scientific ground, that unfortunate births are not the probable results from the marriage of relatives, except under peculiar circumstances, and that it is only where persons of similar temperaments are united that this result is probable—or, in other words, where both parents resemble the same branch of their family. He drew these conclusions partly from an extended practical experience, and an opinion so well founded had long since altered Mr. Howard's view in a very great degree. But still he thought that such marriages were not desirable, and that all things had turned out for the best in regard to his daughter, Vivian was young, and absence would cure him of his youthful infatuation.

And there he thought the matter ended; but, as the wisest of us sometimes do, "he reckoned without his host," as an old saying goes; for, after the doctor pronounced Brenda well, she seemed to decline; no vestige of her injury remained, but her natural vivacity and animation seemed in a measure to have forsaken her. She was, if possible, more amiable and considerate to those around her than ever, but she was becoming an object of anxious solicitude to all, and especially to her devoted father. Every one seemed to have an undefined fear that something was wrong in the household.

Mrs. Howard had a vague impression that her daughter's condition was in some way associated with the sudden and unceremonious departure of Vivian Barton; but she had no tangible clue to the case, and so she waited with the well-tried patience of a mother.

The fact was the heart of this fair flower had received a shock which must have caused it to perish but for the timely circumstance of her father's having drawn her to him one day, asking her if she had any secret sorrow. To this interrogatory the gentle maiden answered "No," and would have concealed her secret; but he saw the truth in her manner, and taking Vivian's letter from his pocket, he placed it in her hand and told her to read it, saying as he did so:

"Brenda, do you love Vivian Barton?"

She answered, with her arms around his neck and her head upon his shoulder:

"Yes, even as mother loves you, dear father."

Mr. Howard kissed her, and said:

"Well, my darling child, I will not be an obstacle in the path of your happiness. With your mother's consent, you may write to Vivian, for I know him to be a noble fellow; and if ever he returns, and has not forgotten you, you may turn the old home of my father upside down and inside out."

So Brenda sought her mother, who was so rejoiced to see the bright smile of old on the sweet face of her daughter that she could not have resisted if she had been so disposed confirming the consent which had been given by her father. After this event a change soon followed: the old house grew to be like itself again and so did the sweet girl.

One bright morning, as Vivian Barton had been indulging in one of the gloomy reveries that now habitually attacked him, a missive was put into his hand. The address was in a masculine hand, which he at once recognized as that of his uncle, and as he drew the letter from the envelope the photograph of his lovely cousin fell on the bench by his side. His heart leaped with joy, and he unfolded the welcome letter and read as follows:

"DEAR COUSIN VIVIAN—Papa has shown me the letter you sent him, and with his permission I write to say that, if you are willing to return, and have not forgotten, he will address you in the language of Laban to Jacob, 19th verse, and 29th chapter of Genesis. BRENDA."

Vivian, on turning to the passage mentioned, found these lines: "And Laban said, it is better that I give her to thee than that I should give her to another man; abide with me."

From this moment Vivian was a new man. He has claimed his bright reward, lives in a handsome house near Mr. Howard's, and Vivian is a thriving farmer, his happiness crowding out of his mind that mournful time when he was vainly endeavoring to forget her who had taken possession of his heart.

W. F.



THYRA DESMOND;

OR,

THE MAIDEN OF THE LAKE

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Spring may bloom, but she we loved
No'er shall feel its sweetness.
Time that once so fleetly moved,
Now hath lost its fleetness;
Years were days when here she strayed,
Days were moments near her;
Heaven ne'er formed a brighter maid,
Nor pity wept a dearer.

SIR HILARY VESCI was a granite nature, and his resolutions were usually as indomitable as those of the Medes and Persians.

Surely there must have been a stronger and a more melting influence at work to crush and to change the stern, cold dictum that had been pronounced by his lips.

Surely no such minor engines as the wishes or the arguments of his son would ever have availed to guide his conduct, or to induce him to distrust his own judgment where the young Erica was concerned.

And yet it was a fact, a certain and acknowledged fact from his own lips that the plans and arrangements he had made were entirely reversed after the unexpected arrival of Brian at Mullingar.

Assuredly some coup was being attempted by the baronet.

There was a decent delay ere any action was taken. There was apparently every reason to consider that the pause already made on the journey was the sole period necessary for the recovery of the young and startled patient, whose nerves had been so rudely shattered on the route.

But yet—but yet—it was not altogether enough to account for the excessive care that was prescribed for the girl in all the arrangements for her travels. It was not enough to cause the cushioned paddings, the wraps, the pillows, and the refreshments that were carefully provided on Erica's behalf.

Then, too, the hours for the travel were so skillfully arranged that no undue stress should be laid on the girl's strength, and the avoidance of any shake to her sensitive nerves.

Brian watched all this with a kind of contemptuous satisfaction that did not bode well for the future agreement between the father and the son.

He could comprehend that Sir Hilary was in a measure guided and convinced that his apprehensions were but too correct.

[THE DOCTOR'S VERDICT.]

And yet no credit was given for their conception, and no frank and real confidence reposed in him where a dear and mutual interest was in the question.

But it mattered not, so long as his ends were secured, so long as Erica's life was safe—and it might be added, secondly, so long as Thyra Desmond was free from all blame, and placed once more at his young sister's side.

All the rest was of little moment to Brian Vescei, and it was nearest of all to his heart to see Thyra once again, to have once more scope and opportunity to win her love, to push his suit to the uttermost, and to repay in some degree the heavy debt that they owed to the young recluse—the fair lake maiden.

Then he would be happy—at least, so he believed. But who can estimate the folly of human wishes. Who can decide for themselves, or for others, the consummation that would bring to the very height that eminence which can be hoped for on earth—the accomplishment of earthly bliss?

And the day came when these arrangements were completed, and the timorous invalid carefully placed in the well-stuffed carriage that would scarcely admit of the slightest variations by the movement of the train.

On either side were those dearest to her—her father and brother—to guard her from ill, and yet she had a timorous dread, a longing for one who had the power of inspiring more confidence in her young heart.

She felt as if the very sight of Thyra Desmond's calm, sweet face would still her tremors, as if she would be content to lay her head on her bosom and repose, as if on a firm and sheltering rock, free from all apprehensions for present and future.

"Are you comfortable? Are you quite easy, my darling?" asked Sir Hilary, anxiously.

"I—oh, yes," replied the girl. "And yet—and yet—I have such a strange powerlessness that I cannot understand. So weak, so very weak. It seems so stupid when I have nothing to occasion it."

And Erica looked appealingly from one to the other of her companions as she spoke.

"We will soon ascertain all about it, love, when we arrive in Dublin," replied Sir Hilary, eagerly, "and if that should fail we will go on to London. I shall never rest until my darling is in her perfect health once more—no, not if it cost me all my fortune," he pronounced, defiantly.

Did Thyra's warning occur to him? Did he remember the sharp rebuff he had administered to her judicious alarms?

If he did, surely there must have been an increased pang to those he already was anticipating for the future as well as suffering for the present.

But his was no temper to acknowledge such a remorse, and if it did torture his mind it rather displayed itself in an additional crabbedness to his son on every possible occasion than in any actual allusion to the young girl he had dismissed so suddenly from his companionship.

"Dr. Burrows, my very life is in your hands," said the baronet, the morning after their safe advent in the Hibernian capital. "My life is in my child's, for I feel as if I were bound up in her as a second self. Command all, everything that may be needful to restore her to health."

The physician looked with a kind but serious expression on the agitated countenance of the old baronet.

"My dear Sir Hilary, depend on it we are not a mercenary race, we doctors, and if we were you have offered quite enough to tempt the most avaricious," he replied. "I assure you I am so interested in my sweet young patient that I may honestly say I would willingly bring her round for no remuneration save the pleasure of seeing her recovery, but—"

"But what? What have you to object to my offer?" interrupted Sir Hilary. "Surely you cannot mean that—that you are doubtful as to her recovery? It is impossible—you would not jest! There can be no such cruelty in store for me and mine!"

It was very hard to bear that quivering lip and the piteous eyes that pleaded for a favourable reply almost more than the anxious words.

Dr. Burrows had not only a reputation to sustain but he was also far too high-minded a man to wilfully deceive the doting father of the sweet patient in his keeping.

"I have not the worst to announce to you, my dear sir," he said. "Happily, the life of your young daughter is not in any present or imminent danger, indeed, I quite believe in my heart that she will be spared to you for many a long year, nay, that it will be as a natural course of things that she may outlive you even now."

"Well, well, go on," said Sir Hilary, chokingly.

"What then—what would you say, Dr. Burrows?"

"I would tell you the whole truth, that you may be able to take your measures accordingly," replied the physician. "The fact is, Sir Hilary, that the cause of all this unnatural prostration from which Miss Vescei suffers is a very simple one. There has

been a severe stretch to the brain, the whole nervous system has been affected, and consequently the nerves and muscles are completely shattered. That is the whole explanation of Miss Vesel's case. It is no common weakness from which she is suffering, or at her age and with her natural power of constitution we should soon conquer it."

"And the end—the result?" asked the father, hoarsely.

"The only danger is that the weakness may ascend, as it were, instead of being as now confined to the physical powers. Then she would suffer much more, and, what is worse, the danger would be far greater than at present."

Sir Hilary sat like one too much bewildered for calm or comprehensive thought.

"My child, my darling, my Elice!" broke from him, at scattered and broken intervals. "And I must see this—and yet with no cure—no hope!"

"Nay, nay, Sir Hilary, there you exaggerate my meaning," returned the doctor, kindly. "What I meant to say was simply this—you must be prepared for a long and tedious period of invalidity with your young daughter, but I hope and believe it will have an end, and that, with the greatest and most judicious care and official watchfulness, she may in time entirely rally from this. I take it that she is now simply suffering from an accidental injury, not from any constitutional derangement, and that makes a material difference in the case."

"Alas! alas! and she has no mother, no one to watch over her with the care and tenderness of which you speak," murmured the old baronet. "It is useless for the only faithful attendant I can command to attempt anything but a physical cure of her health, and that will be the competency of those avail from whom you tell me doctor," he went on, appealingly.

The physician cleared his throat hesitatingly. "To do so is one whom you could engage for the purpose, Sir Hilary?" he asked. "I should think there are many who would willingly undertake the pleasant duty of attending your own girl patient, if you do but make inquiries; indeed I myself would do the utmost to find a suitable companion for her, only that I might scarcely to completely meet her tastes and yours as would be desirable."

A deep flush rose to Sir Hilary's very brow. He knew perfectly well who would be the very choice of his child's heart and the best comforter he could provide for her in her grievous trial. But the old rose to his mind—the old declaration that he had made in time past.

He would rather see his children in the grave than wedded against his will and pride of birth and race.

There was an absolute certainty that such would be the case now were he to yield to his natural instincts.

He could not, he dared not expect that Elice, in his impetuosity of youthful passion, could resist the fair and fascinating girl to whom they already owed so much.

He could not banish him from his home during the interval, and exile the brother from his only and invalid sister's side.

No, he would try some safer plan.

There were numbers of women of safe and of mature age who would be as a mother to the young Elice, and who would unite every requisite for her care.

"Well, my dear sir," he replied, at length, "I am very grateful for your caution and your advice, but I will ask one more favour at your hands before you leave us. Will you accompany me to Elice's chamber once again and tell her yourself, in a modified form, what you have said to me and let me be spared the pain of such an announcement?"

Dr. Barrows smiled rather pityingly.

"My dear Sir Hilary," he replied, "I will certainly comply with so very simple a request; but still I am convinced it will be a most superfluous fear on your part. I have seldom met with any one, I believe, who will bear the truth more hopefully than my patient would. But come, we will test my penetration at once if you please. I fear I must not linger, as I have another patient waiting for me of no small importance as a case, a woman of rank and position. I am going to Lady Kathleen Clare, who is in a very precarious state of health, though I hope not hopelessly so. So come, we are but losing time," he went on, as Sir Hilary appeared to pause in his progress from the room.

"Lady Kathleen Clare," he said, musingly. "Yes, I once knew her, I believe, in other days; but, dear me, what is the past to the present, and what can life be to one of her age when compared with my Elice in her very springtime of youth and beauty? Dr. Barrows, if there is mercy in Heaven or skill on earth surely my child, my darling, will be saved to me. But come, we will see how she can bear the

sorrow. She has the spirit of her race for active courage, but this is a fearful and a more distressing sorrow than any more acute and sudden trial. However, it were better for you to announce it to her. Come, I entrust you, come and speak the truth, I dare not."

And the stern, self-controlled baronet gave an involuntary shiver as he led the way to his daughter's chamber, which they had recently quitted.

Dr. Barrows himself perhaps somewhat recoiled from the task assigned him.

There was no pleasing duty in bidding that young, blossoming Eden of a noble race resign herself to the inevitable doom of a prolonged suffering helplessness and, it might be, a severe and hopeless result of such a probation.

But the physician was no imperfect judge of character. His study of human nature had at once been too varied and intimate for him to mistake very egregiously its characteristics.

And even in his brief interview with Elice Vesel he had formed no unfavorable opinion of her qualities of mind and heart. He had believed her to possess a real truly feminine power of endurance, and a pride that would assist her to crush back all vain and empty aspirations of plaint and suffering. And it was, perhaps, rather an interesting study of character that awaited him and disengaged his performance of the unenviable task which would so severely test the girl's powers.

"Miss Vesel," he said, placing himself beside her, "I have been taking time to mature and consider your case, as we always do when we are especially anxious to form a true and accurate judgment for our most interesting patients, and your father fancies that you will prefer my announcing to you in plain and uncompromising English what we have decided upon. Do you really prefer, can you summon up courage, to listen and try to understand what I have to say?"

Elice's large eyes were lifted up thoughtfully to the physician's face with no meddlesome and yet questioning gaze.

"You mean that you have something to say that will not please me," she returned, with a compressed lip, as if she feared her own endurance. "But it must be very bad if I cannot listen quietly, and I am not very cowardly. I have too true Vesel blood for that," she added, with a wan smile.

"Yes, and I have no doubt that the same spirit would induce you to be a soldier if you were a man," said the physician, with an approving nod. "Only, you see, my dear, that you are unluckily a woman in petto, and have more to bear than do. You are in the passive rather than in the active mood, and therefore more glorious and less gloated. Do you understand?"

"I think so—I think I do," she replied. "Anyway, go on. Tell me the whole truth, however bad."

And though her cheek somewhat paled, the beautiful eyes were undimmed by tears or alarm as she spoke, and Dr. Barrows felt that his course was plain.

"I believe you, Miss Vesel," he said, calmly, "and for your father's sake I do not doubt you will perform your promise. And after all it is not so very terrible what I have to say," he continued, with rather a forced laugh. "It is only this, Miss Vesel. You have been very much shaken by the abominable train where you met your accident, and it has shattered your whole nervous system to the very foundation. Now, only time and quiet and calmness can avail to conquer this, always in addition to such treatment as I can suggest, and that may be joined in by others of equal or more skill. It is very hard, perhaps, very difficult, for you to look forward steadily to this, and to resign yourself to such bondage. But you will, I believe, be fully rewarded for the effort by recovering at last."

Elice's cheeks did certainly change very much as Dr. Barrows spoke.

There was the resolute maiden's hate that is so lovely to behold, and that warmed rapidly into a deep and more dangerous vermillion ere he had finished, when it again faded to more than her former ashen paleness of tint.

"You doubt even then that I shall recover, is it not so?" she asked, quietly. "Dr. Barrows, remember that unless you tell me the very whole and entire truth I shall only be naughty and impatient, and I fear I should blame you very much at last. Are you sure I should get well if I do all you wish?"

The physician looked doubtfully on her. It was as if he were feeling the pulse of some doubtful patient, of whose strength and ability to bear pain he was in doubt.

"Miss Vesel, my dear child," he returned, at last, "it is not for me to pronounce on so rare a case as

yours with absolute precision; it is in Heaven's hands alone, but I do tell you thus much, that if you are obedient and calm, the chances are much—very much—in your favour."

"And for how long, is it probable?" she said, quickly.

"I can scarcely tell," he replied. "Perhaps for months, it might be for years. But I scarcely believe it will be long. It is far more probable that you will rally before you are fully grown up, and that you will be quite ready to take your place in the fashionable world at the appointed age, my dear young lady," he continued. "In any case, we shall be able to judge better as you progress, and I have now told you all that I really know myself, so that even feminine curiosity can demand no more."

Elice sighed deeply. It was more than so young a nature could endure to look steadily at such a prolonged vista of suffering and helplessness; but she crushed down the rising sob, and only breathed out the melancholy cry:

"Oh, if Thyra could but come; if she were but here!"

But it was scarcely audible to the physician, and Sir Hilary barely inclined to grant any further questioning.

"My beloved child shall have everything that love and care and money can procure to alleviate her sufferings," he said, quietly. "And now, Dr. Barrows, we must not detain you any longer, as you have already given us such abundant measure of your time. We shall be more able to speak calmly on the subject when you come again to see your patient. At present, my Elice must rest in the loving attention of her mother and distrust swine for happiness and comfort."

CHAPTER XXIX.

In the same days after Thyras' departure, the arrival of Lady Maud Thyras, and she was beginning by slow degrees to feel in more little measure at home in her new residence. Yet, with all her humility and resolution of soul, there could scarcely fail to be much which was trying and painful to her spirit in her fresh position and duties. She had spent years in devotion to her beloved father, she had given the care and the labour of the most anxious and conscientious spirit to Nora O'Byrne's little ones, and she had never *before* regretted or mourned in the fatigues or privations thus undergone; but it was all different now.

The stimulus of love had vanished—that the certainty that no tender eyes were gladdened and no precious being aided by the fruits of her industry was depressing to her young spirit.

True, she was gaining its independence, and no one was taxed by contributing to her support, or working for her relief and her comfort was salutatory to her pride.

But the youthful prattle and the joyous laughter of the children under her charge had a depressing as well as soothing influence on her mind.

Too tender and bright herself not to enter into their joys and sports, it could scarcely fail to contrast bitterly with the long sad days of her own past life, which had scarcely been fully comprehended by her till now, when she saw what a happy, thoughtless life a child could lead under happier auspices than her own.

She was watching their infantine sports, one afternoon, when the day's lessons were completed, when she received a summons from her patroness to come to her in the morning-room, and comment on some trifling change Lady Maud wished in the text-books that had hitherto been used for the baby teaching that was now maturing into more serious instruction.

Thyras lingered a few minutes to make the necessary arrangements for the children, and also for collecting the books to take with her to Lady Maud, and she heard a carriage drive up in the meanwhile, which made her pause as to the propriety of risking an encounter with visitors to her patroness.

But, as no warning came, she felt that the plainest and simplest course was to ignore such fears, and she proceeded to the apartment where she knew the lady would be found.

But again, when she reached the door, she paused to listen whether any unwelcome voice could be heard, but in vain, all was silent, and supposing Lady Maud was alone, and that the visitors—if any had really arrived—had simply contented themselves with leaving cards, she quietly turned the lock and entered.

There was but one tenant of the room—a lady, with her back turned towards her, in a walking attire that was not altogether unlike a dress that Lady Maud wore on their first meeting at the station. And again arguing with herself that the lady was probably intending to drive out, as soon as the interview was ended, she softly and gently advanced.

Her light footfall had pressed the mountain heather well nigh without bending or crushing its blossoms, and it was little wonder if it did not make any audible sound on the thick Axminster carpet with which the room was covered, and in which the very shoes seemed buried as it trod.

Thus it was some few minutes ere the former tenant of the apartment was aware that she was not alone, from the indefinable and scarcely heard noises that are inseparable from the presence of any living being.

She turned suddenly round, and Thyras at once perceived that it was not her patroness, whom she was prepared to greet, but a lady, younger, fairer, and decidedly at once more haughty and more scornful in expression than Lady Maud.

But if Thyras comprehended this as a glance, if she admired beyond compare the rich and gorgeous beauty of the face and figure before her, the lady in her turn was far more aloof and fixed in the attention that she actually riveted on Thyras's face. Every line and every feature was perused as in a book, ere she seemed to remember the rudeness of her gaze, or that the young girl was evidently doubting as to the course she should take under these circumstances.

"I suppose you came to see the Lady Maud?" she said, suddenly, as Thyras was preparing to leave the apartment. "She will not be long before she returns. She is only gone to fetch a book that I wanted to see."

Thyras bowed in graceful acknowledgment, but this did not appear to change her intention. "I need not trouble Lady Maud now that she is engaged," she said. "She wished to see me, but I will return when she is alone."

"Nay, you had better wait till she comes," replied the lady. "I may perhaps remain some little time, or she take her off with me, if she will go. I suppose I am not such an ogre as to terrify you, nor am I quite a princess of the blood to make it improper for you to remain in my presence," she added, with a half-scornful laugh.

Thyras did not reply, except by one of her own sweetest smiles, that threw a sunshine over her face, which recalled her former bright loveliness with dazzling though transient beauty that brought a strange contraction to the lady's brow.

"Are you as intimate with Lady Maud's household?" she asked, quickly. "I fancy I have seen you before, but I am not quite sure."

"I am the governess to her children. I do not suppose you can have met me, as I only came to Dublin a few days since," replied Thyras, with a half-concealed smile at the abruptness of the question. "I think it was about this day week that I arrived," she added, reflectively, "no longer."

It was enough to enlighten her companion as to her identity with the fair girl she had seen in Lady Maud's carriage when turning from the physician's door, and Lady Beatrix Clara—for it was she—at once shrank with instinctive aversion from the humble yet dangerous rival she so strongly believed the girl would prove.

Perhaps Thyras Desmond's survey was scarcely so minute, though it gave her a quick and it must be confessed "unpleasant" idea of her new acquaintance.

But, luckily, ere there was time to enter into any more close and decisive conversation, Lady Maud reappeared.

"Ha, Miss Desmond," she said, quickly, as her eyes fell on the half-concealed form of the young governess. "I really must beg your pardon, for I know I sent for you a short time since, and yet I have almost forgotten the errand for which I wanted you."

And the giddy though kindly little woman gave a little joyous laugh at her own short memory of passing events.

"It is of too little moment to be worth a moment's consideration, Lady Maud," said Thyras, with a mingling of humility and pride in her tone. "I will come to you again when you are disengaged, and, meanwhile I can go on in the same way with the little ones till you have decided on the alterations on which you spoke."

And the girl made a low and graceful courtesy as she prepared to leave the room.

But Lady Maud stopped her with the native gentle courtesy which distinguished her.

"No, no, Miss Desmond, I will not allow any such thing. It will be far better for you to take the law in your own hands and do whatever you please for the present. And I shall, I'm sure, be perfectly satisfied with whatever you think right."

There was a sarcastic smile on the fair face of Lady Beatrix as Thyras quietly thanked her patroness and disappeared from the room.

"Really, Maud, you are most confiding in your ideas," she said. "One would think that the young person in question was the mother and the mistress and you the underling. How is she to obey you when you give her such licence, I should like to know?"

Lady Maud smiled, with a slight constraint in her air.

"Well, Beatrix, I have always found that it is far better to show too much than too little confidence and indulgence. Depend upon it, it is the best extreme, whether with husband, lover, children or governess. They will trust you, obey and work for you far more implicitly in their turn. So far I am convinced by long experience, and so will you in your turn, Miss Beatrix," she continued, significantly. "I mean when you are married or when you are fully engaged."

Lady Beatrix gave a pained, convulsive start. "What do you mean by that, Maud?" she said. "Do you suppose that my betrothal, of which I have related to you all the details, is a mere insult, that the daughter and heiress of the Oshers is to be discarded at pleasure like a mere village maiden or a domestic servant, who carries on half a dozen such flirtations at once? If that is your idea you must have a very low opinion of our order, or of me in particular," she went on, hurriedly, flushing herself as she proceeded with the enumeration of her grievances.

Lady Maud was perplexed between her own real opinion of her character and proceedings. She was tolerably convinced as to the cause of the miserable duel that had taken place between her old friend and her distant relative, and yet it was more harsh and churlish than belonged to her sweet feminine nature to aggravate the real unhappiness of the circumstances.

"Am I to answer in my own downright and Hibernian fashion, Beatrix?" she said, "or do you wish me to say that 'it is very like a whale,' whatever you may be pleased to state?"

"Say the truth so far as you mean it. I do not promise to admit or not admit," was the haughty response. "I am tolerably accustomed to think for myself in most things, but it is amusing to watch the different ideas that people take of what they have little means of comprehending."

Lady Maud shook her head reproachfully.

"Ah, Beatrix, Beatrix, lookers on see most of the game," she replied. "And, though I must say for my own credit that I never was a flirt and that Digby Tracey was my first and only love, yet it is so completely in woman's nature to be a coquette that there are very few females who have not the talent for and the comprehension of the art."

"Which you ascribe to me, I presume?" said Beatrix, sharply.

"Can you deny it in your own conscience, Beatrix?" said Lady Maud. "Can you really declare that you behaved to your cousin as a betrothed lover should and that he had no cause whatever to resent your encouragement of Lord Orammore's attentions?"

Beatrix only replied by a sudden pout of the lips.

"It is enough," said Lady Maud. "I cannot be more effectually answered now, but I do earnestly trust that you may never have cause to remember my warning, Beatrix. I trust that either my foolish cousin may recover or that you may bring back Lord Ashworth to your side by the devotion you will display for him."

"And what that your method with Mr. Tracey, Maud?" said Beatrix, warmly. "Did you bring his love by displaying yours a hundredfold? I would rather see a dozen lovers at my feet dying or dead than lure them to life so disgracefully. I must have all, and from a spontaneous and real devotion, or I would not condescend to adopt one mark of love and homage. And in this case it is so most decidedly. Gaston Ashworth was unreasonable, he wanted to bind me to the very uttermost while heaping himself free. He wanted to be a proud and triumphant tyrant, while I was to forfeit all my rights, and that I would not. I had all to give and I was not disposed to receive nothing."

And a hot flush burned two deep red spots in the girl's rounded cheeks.

Lady Maud read her perhaps more correctly than Beatrix could have believed possible.

"Had you any reason to believe that he—that Lord Ashworth, I mean—was led away by any one but yourself, that his heart was touched by other charms than your own?" she said, questioningly.

"Scarcely," was the hesitating response. "I never saw him pay such homage as ought to have proved it, unless it was to yourself, Maud," she added, with a half-smile; "but still he was harsh, and proud, and cold, and his professions were but unsatisfactory to me, who knew what real warm love meant, Maud. I was not to blame," she continued, vehemently. "I know perfectly that Gaston is not the iceberg he appears; I know that I have youth, and I may say beauty, and I know too well, wealth, to win his affection and bring him to my feet. And I suspect, I more than suspect, that there is some other attraction that keeps him from me—"

"Your feet, you mean," observed Lady Maud, as the girl stopped in some embarrassment. "Is it so? Then believe me, Beatrix, you have there the true

secret of your failure with your cousin's heart. You claimed what you should have won, you chafed his proud spirit instead of gently guiding and soothing it at your will, and I fear—I fear, you will never cease to regret the folly, the mistake I ought perhaps to say, that you have committed."

Beatrix's proud nature was stung to the utmost by her friend's bold comment, but there was no one else to whom she dare to fly for advice and comfort, and she was fain to smother her resentment for the nonce and strive to get some help in her sore extremity.

"Maud, you are unkind, unjust," she said, pleadingly; "you who have led a smooth and gentle life cannot imagine the galling bitterness of seeing yourself coldly and carelessly slighted for another. I tell you I am certain of what I say, though I cannot prove its truth; I have been kept in weary waiting because Gaston had some other appointment that he did not explain; I have actually seen him with—yes, I do believe, though it seems a silly impossibility to imagine, I do believe that your governess was talking to him once, when I was myself unseen and unobserved, though I cannot be certain of her identity; and, what is more, I cannot pretend to say whether the meeting was a purely accidental one or whether what was passing between them was anything but some ordinary indifferent dialogue. Still it was so, and from that I might well argue what has taken place in my absence, and when I was utterly ignored and forgotten."

Lady Maud certainly did open her eyes in some pained astonishment now.

"Pray where did this take place, Beatrix?" she asked, at length. "Remember that Miss Desmond is not a native or an inhabitant of Dublin, and you may have been mistaken in your observation."

"Perhaps," replied the young lady, scornfully. "I will fully allow that it is possible, and I do more—I cannot suppose that Gaston would be so degraded as to carry on a liaison with a girl so much below him. But as to the place it was in Galway, and though it was but for a few moments, and the mourning that your governess now wears may alter her in some measure, yet there is a strong, —a very strong resemblance between them, only," she went on, "I have no wish to injure the character of your dependent, Maud, only to prove that I was not so much to blame as you might have supposed about Lord Ashworth."

"Well, at any rate there will be no chance for any such improprieties to go on in my house," said Lady Maud, with a slight superiority in her tone. "Miss Desmond will be taken care of, I can assure you, or else she will at once be dismissed from her situation. But where Lord Ashworth is in the question I fear there is little danger that he will be tried, or she either. I am told that there is but little hope of poor Lord Orammore's recovery, and if so Heaven help poor Gaston, for he can never be happy or safe any more."

Lady Beatrix shuddered in her turn.

"Maud, Maud, why are you so cruel? You know that it is simply torturing me to talk thus. Why do you not try to cheer and comfort me instead of those gloomy predictions?"

"What can I do, Beatrix—what can I do?" said Lady Maud, sadly. "I will put all the interest in my power at work to shelter Gaston, but if his opponent died it would be thought a disgrace and shame were I to take open part with the murderer of my kinsman. However, I shall do my utmost from my deep sympathy with the one who I believe was the least to blame in the whole matter; and as one step towards it I shall accompany you home to see your aunt Kathleen if she will admit me to her invalid room. And between us we may accomplish some mode of shielding Lord Ashworth from danger, if not from remorse."

"How—why? I do not see what she can have to do with it at her age, and with such long absence from the world," said Beatrix, doubtingly.

Lady Maud smiled rather sadly.

"You are not versed in all the ramifications and windings of the world's ways, Beatrix, or you would not be so astonished; I have a much more exalted opinion of your good aunt's powers if I can persuade her to exercise them. And as to the rest of your anxieties, I think I can test their justice without much difficulty. For the sake of the children I shall do my utmost to prove the character of their governess to be without spot or stain. Come, Beatrix," she added, quickly, "let us go. I have no time to spend in delay and deliberation. I must return by five o'clock when my husband will be at home to fetch me for some official visits—and I never, if it is possible, keep him waiting in an appointment with me."

She hastily rang the bell as she spoke, and hurried away as the chiming of the timepiece gave the warning of the hour, which was already more advanced than she had imagined.

Lady Beatrix followed with some agitation of feeling that had communicated itself to her movements—for by some unusually awkward haste the

chain of her fairy-like watch caught in the doorway, and well nigh snappd in the violent wrench. Lady Beatrix hastily gathered it in her hand and thrust it together in her bosom, but she was altogether unaware that one of the trinkets that were attached to the gold necklet dropped from its hold, and sank unseen and unnoticed in a distant corner of the room which she was hurriedly quitting.

(To be continued.)

BURIED SECRETS.

CHAPTER XVIII.

WHEN Mr. Paulet opened the door of his daughter's sitting-room only a few minutes later he found Diana lying against the window-sill in a dead swoon.

His first impulse was to ring the bell and summon Miss Edgely and Diana's maid, but he wisely restrained it.

"It would create no end of gossip if it were known that she had fainted like this on her marriage-day," he thought. "Better keep such things hushed up. But what can have happened to her?"

He stooped and gathered up the insensible girl in her mass of floating draperies and carried her to a sofa. Before even ministering to her he returned to the casement and looked out. There were the villagers on the lawn, a group of strolling minstrels—nothing, no one, surely, to frighten Diana.

"It's over excitement," he said to himself. "After all, a woman's but a frail creature."

He seized a bottle of cologne from the table and sprinkled her face. He chafed her hands and called her name gently.

Her great, dusky eyes opened slowly, that stare of terror seeming frozen in them.

"Papa! Is it you, papa?" she cried. "Is—is he here?"

"Is whom here? Sir Hugh? Do you want Sir Hugh, Diana?"

"Oh, no, no!" she exclaimed, in a wild terror and excitement. "I cannot see him, papa. Will he up-braid me, do you think? Will there be a great scandal? Oh, what shall I do? Can you ever forgive me—you and Sir Hugh, papa?"

She wrung her hands and a piteous look was on her woeful face.

"What does it all mean, Diana?" demanded her father, impatiently. "Have you gone mad? I came in your room and found you lying against your window insensible, and now you talk like a demented creature. What has happened? What does your wild talk mean?"

Diana drew a long, hard breath and seemed trying to recover her senses.

"I—oh, papa!" she said, brokenly, "I was looking out of the window and saw him"—her voice choked—"Philip, you know, Philip, you know, Philip Ryve! And then I fainted! What did he say? Tell me what he said. I can bear anything—anything now!"

"Philip Ryve? Why, he is dead!"

"Not dead, papa. I saw him!"

"But I say he is dead. I read the notice in the newspapers," said Mr. Paulet. "I hope you are not going to be ill. This is a most singular hallucination!"

"It is not hallucination. I saw him, papa, and he saw me—in this dress!" And she looked down at her bridal robes. "Did he not enter the house?"

"No, Diana, this is all illusion. What put it into your head to think you saw him this day of all others? The man is surely dead and buried. And if he were not and were to return here he could have no possible claim upon you. That girlish fancy of yours for him gave him no claim upon you. Can it be that you love him still?"

"Oh, no, papa—I don't think I love him any more. He was not what I thought him!"—and the girl shuddered. "But I saw him! It was he, papa—Philip Ryve!"

"Impossible! How many times must I assure you that you are mistaken?" said Mr. Paulet, impatiently. "You have been over-excited to-day, Diana. Let me call Sir Hugh. He can soothe you, if anyone can."

Mr. Paulet moved a step towards the door. But Diana sprang up, wild and terrified, and barred his progress.

"Oh, no, no!" she cried. "No, no! I cannot see Sir Hugh again—not now, or ever!"

"Diana!"

"Oh, papa, I am so miserable!" she said, piteously. "I can't see Sir Hugh. It's all over between us for ever."

"All over between you, and you have not been married an hour! What does this mean? Are you mad, girl?"

"Not mad! I wish I were!" moaned the girl, rocking herself to and fro in the very abandonment

of despair. "Not mad, papa, but hardly in my right mind!"

"I should think not. Do you mean that you do not want me to call Sir Hugh?"

"Yes. I cannot see him. Call him into the library, papa. Tell him that I am ill—that I repent my marriage—anything, so that he will go away quietly and leave me here alone in peace."

"And all this because you fancy a resemblance between one of those strolling minstrels below and that dead criminal! I thought you had sense, Diana. It must be that you love that scoundrel Ryve after all. I can bring you proofs that he is dead. I will go down to the lawn myself and find the man the sight of whom has so disturbed you. Shall I do so?"

"No. I saw him."

Mr. Paulet took a turn or two about the room.

"Are you all right now, Diana?" he asked presently, with an anxious face. "You are coming round, are you not? You have gotten over that nonsense about Sir Hugh, eh?"

Diana shook her head.

"But, by Heaven!" cried Mr. Paulet, "I won't have this scandal! I won't have Sir Hugh Redmond openly insulted in this manner before the whole county, dismissed by his new-made bride, as if he were an insolent servant, on his marriage-day. I resent the insult to him as the one to myself. No girl's caprice can bring shame on the name of Paulet or of Redmond, you married Sir Hugh, and, by Heaven! I say you shall stick to him, or I'll know the reason why!"

"Papa, can you not see how I suffer? Spare me. I will write a note to Sir Hugh, telling him that I can never be his wife."

"Do so, and I'll put you in a mad-house!" roared Mr. Paulet, beside himself with anger. "Do you hear me, girl? A mad-house!"

It was upon Diana's tongue to tell him the story of her fatal first marriage, but she dared not. His anger was something frightful to witness, and she could only cower before him.

"I will write to him," she faltered.

"And if you do, you will go forth from this house with my curse upon you! Promise me to give over this mad freak, to be a good wife to Sir Hugh. Promise me, Diana!"

"I cannot—I cannot!"

Mr. Paulet's thin face flamed up with a terrible rage. His lips worked nervously, as if to repress the curse that was trying to escape them.

"I have tried to secure your happiness," he said, "and this is my reward! If you disobey me in this, I cast you off for ever! I will never see your face again!"

"Papa, can a father turn so from his only child?"

"A father? I am not your father! There—I never meant you to know it. I gave my sacred word that you should never hear that truth from my lips, but you have forced it from me."

"Not my father?"

Diana spoke in a hollow whisper. She seemed literally stunned.

"No, I am not your father," repeated Mr. Paulet, locking the door and moving to and fro in a transport of rage. "Not one drop of my blood flows in your veins. Miss Edgely does not know this; not a servant in the house knows it; but the fact remains."

"Then who am I?"

"Who are you?" cried Mr. Paulet, with a sneering laugh. "Would you like to know? Listen. I may as well tell you all the truth since I have told you so much. Before I bought this place we—my wife and I—travelled a great deal. I was always fond of books. She was full of charitable works. She had a soft heart, and it was the great grief of her life that we had no children."

He paused a moment, Diana's eyes, with that stare still in them, disconcerted him. His rage was cooling. He was angry at himself for having broken his word to the dead and resurrected this secret, which had been so long buried. But he continued:

"One day—I'll tell the story briefly—my wife had been out to drive in Hyde Park, and, returning by a short cut through a narrow street, the carriage came near running over a little stray child. My wife, who was always full of pity and tenderness for children, conveyed the little one to the address she could just lip. She saw the mother, a poor widow, with another child. That day at dinner my wife talked incessantly of the beauty of the child who had so narrowly escaped death under the wheels of our carriage. Poor Diana! She wanted to adopt the child, and I let her have her own way."

He came nearer the girl, and a milder expression began to pervade his features.

"The next day I accompanied my wife and our lawyer to the widow's house, and she signed papers giving up all right in and control over the

child for ever, in consideration of a certain sum of money which my wife paid her!"

"And that widow who sold her child was my mother?"

"No. Don't look so like death, Diana! You forced the story from me. Had you obeyed me as a daughter should, you would have gone to your grave in ignorance of your true history. I stayed an hour, long enough to see that the child was beautiful, and to witness the signing of the papers, and then I went away, leaving my wife and the lawyer still there. I remember that Diana told me that the woman made a sworn statement on paper, in which she gave the complete history of the wail; but that paper must have become mislaid. You have my wife's writing-desk. That paper may still be in it, lodged in some crevice or secret drawer. I have never searched for it; for the information it contained came to my knowledge in another way."

"How was that?"

"When I was in London last year buying books one evening I met the very woman of whom my wife purchased you. It was in Oxford Street. She was dressed in shabby black, as when I first saw her. I never forget faces, and she had a broken nose which tended to fix hers in my memory. She knew me, too, and stopped me to ask after 'little Joanna'—her name is Ryan—and also desired me to lend her a sovereign. I lent her the sovereign, and then asked her who were your parents and what was your real name. She replied by asking if I had not seen her written statement given my wife at your adoption. I answered No, that the existence of such a paper had slipped my mind if I had ever known of it, that I had never seen it. And then she told me—but I will spare you the rest, Diana. I am sorry that I have betrayed the fact to you that you are not my own child. Until this hour you have been a good and dutiful daughter to me."

It will be seen that Mr. Paulet's story was the complement to that other tale told by Mrs. Flint to Piers Dalvell, but with a slight difference. She had told Dalvell that the gentleman and lady who adopted one of her little charges had gone immediately abroad and that she had never seen nor heard of them since.

"Go on," said Diana, huskily. "You have told me so much, I must know the rest."

"Do you still refuse to live with Sir Hugh as his wife?"

The girl nodded dumbly.

"Then hear the rest!" exclaimed Mr. Paulet, with sudden heat. "The woman told me that your real name was Mary Cartwright, and that your father, one Jack Cartwright, was hanged in Sidney for murder!"

A low cry broke from Diana's lips.

"My wife took you, despite your descent and your father's awful and disgraceful death, to her very heart," said Mr. Paulet. "You were affectionate, loving, caressing. She grew to love you as her own child. I think she was lonely often when I was absorbed in my studies, and the little child filled an aching void in her heart. She dressed you like a fairy. She supplied you with governesses. She induced me to swear never to reveal to you the fact that you were not our own offspring. We took you abroad immediately after your adoption and remained on the continent for years. When we came back to England no one doubted that you were our own, more especially as we had been abroad before for years, and were in London only on a visit when we encountered you. We bought this place, and here my wife was taken ill and died. I was independent in fortune, and with my consent she left her property to you. And in her last days she made me promise anew to endeavour to bring about your marriage with some well-bred, honourable gentleman and never to reveal to him the fact that you were not my child. I have kept my promise as regards Sir Hugh. He does not suspect the truth."

"And he, the representative of one of the proudest families in England, has married the daughter of a man who was hanged for murder!" said Diana, in a voice thrilling with horror of herself and of Jack Cartwright.

"Yes. Sir Hugh thinks much of a spotless lineage. He told me so. He abhors deceit and concealments. He must never know what I have told you. Reflect that you have no longer right to think of yourself. You are Lady Redmond. To separate from Sir Hugh on your marriage day would disgrace both of you!"

"I know it," said Diana, slowly.

"You thought you saw Ryve. If it had been he, and he had had the shadow of a claim upon you, he would have entered the house, or sent you a message by a servant."

"That is so!" The argument fairly staggered the poor young bride.

"You were deceived by a chance resemblance. Look from the window. See if you can see him."

Diana dragged herself to the window, her movements slow and difficult. She saw nothing of the face or figure that had so startled her.

"I may have been mistaken," she faltered, trying to believe it. "He is not there now."
"And has not been there!" cried Mr. Paulet, triumphantly. "Now listen, Diana. You have a duty to Sir Hugh. He is proud; you must consider his pride. Will you humiliate him before all England? Will you set the gossips to work speculating why you abandon him? Will you dare so cruelly wrong a brave and noble gentleman? Will you stab him in his only vulnerable point? Will you make him an exile from his native land, blight his life, destroy his faith in woman, utterly ruin him?"

The girl shuddered a negative.

All the consequences of the step she meditated presented themselves to her in their most forcible aspect. She began to tremble.

And now came stronger doubts that she had seen Philip Ryve. She must be legally Sir Hugh Redmond's wife—she, the daughter of a man who had been hanged for murder!

"Leave me a little while!" she said, hoarsely "I want to be alone!"

Mr. Paulet looked steadily into her young face, gray and ashen now in its pallor, the wild eyes full of fierce questioning, a passionate despair in every feature. He had stabbed her cruelly. Would she think to escape her troubles by suicide?

But there was no desperation in her face. Only nutterable despair. He left her in silence, angry with himself and her, and went out into the hall and waited.

She fell upon her knees. She could not pray. Her thoughts were all in chaos. She could not frame an intelligible sentence in her own mind, but surely Heaven read that tortured soul, and knew all its wants and yearnings, and all that she would have said if she could.

What was right for her to do?

Could it be right for her to ruin Sir Hugh Redmond's life? To bring scandal on his name? Never. And yet, could she suffer him to take to his bosom a woman of disgraceful parentage, a woman with a secret in her own life? It was hard to decide. Diana arose from her knees, and tried to think out the solution to these questions.

"I will stay with him at least for the present," she thought, at last. "He must never suspect one word of the truth. And yet I must remain his wife only in name. After a time some path may be opened to me."

Mr. Paulet opened the door gently and peeped in.

"Come in," said Diana, with a wan smile. "I have decided."

"And your decision?"

"I have no right to bring scandal upon the two names so generously bestowed upon me," she said. "I will go to Sir Hugh."

Mr. Paulet's face showed his relief.

"That's a sensible girl!" he ejaculated. "Forgive me the pain I've caused you, Diana. Keep the secret as sacred which I have imparted to you, and remember that the child of my dear wife's love and adoption is my child also, and dearer to me than any other creature on earth. Kiss me, Diana! Tell me that you forgive the sorrow I have given you!"

Diana put up her tender, grieved mouth with a child's simplicity, and she embraced her affectionately.

Presently he went out, a great burden lifted from his spirits, and she was again alone.

She rang her bell; Annette came, and the bridal robes were exchanged for the travelling costume of brown silk and brown velvet. The carriage which was to convey the bridal party to the station drove up, and a wagonette for maid, valet, and luggage appeared behind it.

Miss Edgely slipped upstairs and returned with the bride, whose face was veiled, and who was followed by her maid.

Sir Hugh Redmond assisted Diana into the carriage, and they drove away amid a shower of old slippers.

And thus Diana entered upon her second marriage.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE man whom Diana had seen at the Yews was not Philip Ryve, for he was actually dead and buried, but was Philip Ryve's brother and counterpart, Piers Dalryell. And how he happened to be there at that critical period, or at all, we will now relate.

He had been married to Lolette Ryan some three months, and that marriage was still unacknowledged.

Mrs. Flint had established herself and foster-daughter in excellent lodgings in Lower Tottenham Court Road, at considerable distance from her

former quarters, and Lolette was known as Miss Flint.

Under her assumed name of Mademoiselle Zoë Lolette was still the star of Bingley's Music Hall, and received her nightly applause and bouquets with even greater zest than ever.

Teachers had been applied to Mrs. Dalryell in all the polite branches of learning, but she had coolly dismissed them all, after the briefest possible trial, declaring that she knew enough already, that she was married, her "market made," and there was no use in studying like a schoolgirl.

In vain were all Dalryell's promises, persuasions, urgings and threatenings.

Lolette was as determined as he. She would not learn, and after a vigorous contest of wills he was vanquished.

"If I knew enough before we were married, I know enough now," said Lolette. "And if I didn't know enough then, you ought not to have married me. I won't study, not to please the queen herself. I set my foot down to that."

Dalryell understood well by this time the character of the woman he had made his wife. Ignorant, vain and shallow there was little of actual good in her nature. She had no love for him, and her demands upon his purses were unceasing.

She required a carriage to drive in the park daily and to convey her to and from Bingley's. She bought jewellery in quantities, but it was of the cheapest description, base imitation, which she wore with as proud an air as a duchess wears her coronet.

She brought clothing in profusion, showy garments of satin and velvet, which she wore at the concert-saloon, in the carriage, and in the street indiscriminately.

She declared that she was now a lady, and assumed all the airs she deemed appropriate to a lady.

She snubbed Mrs. Flint a dozen times a day, she was supercilious, domineering and overbearing. In short, she could not bear prosperity, and she made her foster-mother's life a burden to her.

Not but that Mrs. Flint had compensations. She, too, indulged her fancies, dressed expensively, and drove in the park.

She no longer cooked their simple meals over a spirit lamp, but was served by her landlady, to whom she talked grandly of the time when her "second kept a public," and she had two servants to wait upon her.

The secret of Lolette's marriage was kept by both the women with the most scrupulous fidelity. In truth, as Dalryell was the source of all their present good fortune, they dared not risk offending him by a declaration of the marriage.

As may be imagined, all this expense told heavily upon Dalryell. He was the recipient of an income of four hundred pounds a year from Lord Thorncombe. He had received this sum annually for several years, and, having been much of the time lodged at Thorncombe Manor, free of all expense, like a son of the house, his wants had not consumed his income, and he had managed to put in bank some seven hundred pounds against a possible time of need.

Within three months of his marriage this reserved store had been entirely exhausted. It had gone in carriage-hire, rent of lodgings, imitation jewellery, women's fripperies, and what not.

He saw with dismay that his income would not support these two women in their present style of living and provide also for his own wants.

In this strait he went to Lord Thorncombe and boldly asked for an increase of income.

The earl heard him out very quietly, but shook his head, with a smile.

"Four hundred a year ought to suffice a young man without family and without establishment to support," said his lordship. "If you were to be my heir, Dalryell, I would comply with your request and double your income. But you are not to be my heir, and you know you have no claim whatever upon me. The sum I pay you I purpose making an annuity for life, which will be binding on my heirs. I must consider, first of all, my grand-daughter and the children she may bear."

"What would he say," thought Dalryell, "if he knew that I share this money with his grand-daughter—that I shall be the father of his grand-children?"

But he was not yet ready to declare to the earl the fact that he had discovered Mrs. Ryan and her charge.

"If you are in debt, Dalryell," said the earl, kindly, "I will help you out. But I can't make a permanent thing of such assistance. You understand me, my boy? Blanche first—Blanche always, you know."

"A hundred pounds would help me," said Dalryell, sullenly.

The earl wrote out a cheque for the amount, and the young man departed, full of mingled wrath and exultation.

"It will all come to me some day," he said to himself, "Blanche being my wife. Stingy old hunk! Out of twenty thousand a year he gives me four hundred! Never mind. I'll stand in his shoes some day! I'll be master of twenty thousand a year! Won't he open his eyes when I present Lolette to him as Blanche Berwyn, his son's child!"

He thought by day and night of plans for bringing the two—the earl and the danseuse—together, without betraying to his lordship the fact that he, Dalryell, was a despicable fortune-hunter.

"I can go to him, and say, 'my lord, this is your grandchild, and my wife,'" he mused, "but he would declare that I had found her out, and treacherously married her, keeping her in ignorance of her birth and fortune, and he would speak the truth! I don't want to forfeit his respect, for he might induce Lolette to seek a divorce. I might say to him, 'My lord, I married this girl for love, and I now discover that she is Blanche Berwyn.' That is what I intended to say. It might go down if the girl were educated or refined; but she's a savage, a bold-eyed gipsy, and in spite of her handsome face she's decidedly lower-class in style and manners. Yet she won't learn. She won't improve. She won't abandon Bingley's. What plan can I hit upon to bring the two together, and yet not lose my position with either?"

This problem afforded him ample food for reflection. He pondered upon it constantly, devising and rejecting plan after plan.

Matters were in this state when he bethought himself of his brother and his brother's fate, and determined to take his long-determined-upon run down into Dorsetshire and ascertain for himself the particulars of Philip Ryve's death.

Accordingly, one day in October, he journeyed down to Wareham. It was here that Philip Ryve had died on his journey in custody towards London, and here that he had been buried.

Dalryell sought out the proper authorities and obtained what knowledge they could impart, and visited his brother's pauper grave. It was scarcely necessary to state that he did not declare to any one the fact of his relationship to the dead criminal.

He learned that Ryve had been apprehended near the hamlet of Leddiston, where he had been stopping several weeks, and that he had shot himself upon the heath when the police officers had come upon him.

Dalryell proceeded to Leddiston.

Here his astonishing resemblance to Ryve was commented upon, the innkeeper at Leddiston believing that his former guest had somehow survived his wound, escaped custody, and returned to his former haunts.

"I'm his twin brother," said Dalryell, and then he added: "My name is Ryve also, of course. And now tell me all about the poor fellow, this one black sheep in our family."

The innkeeper had only good to tell of Philip Ryve. He had been gentle and kind and courteous always, very melancholy at times, very hopeful at others.

"I think he must have been led into evil," said the landlord. "He would never have gone wrong himself. He was weak, sir, not wicked."

And this estimate of Ryve was a true one.

"His was a sad death," sighed Dalryell.

"Yes, sir. The young lady he chanced to be riding with fell into a swoon and came out of that into brain fever, of which she nearly died."

"The young lady? Was he riding with a young lady? Who was she?"

"It was mere chance that he rode with her, they say," said the innkeeper, "although they went out to Rosney Heath and back together. She's a young lady of the very highest respectability, sir, Miss Paulet of The Yews, a gloomy place, sir, on the road to Wareham. She was lately home from boarding-school—the most beautiful young lady in Dorsetshire, and she's to be married to-morrow to Sir Hugh Redmond, baronet!"

"And my poor brother and this beautiful young lady rode to Rosney Heath together. What is Rosney Heath?"

"A mere hamlet, sir, some miles beyond, remarkable only for its old church. It's two hundred years old, the church; and people go to see it sometimes."

"Odd the young lady should go into brain fever because Philip Ryve shot himself!" observed Dalryell, musingly. "I think I'll go out to Rosney Heath, and have a look at the old church."

He ordered a fly, a rickety old vehicle, and drove to Rosney Heath. He visited the church, explored its crypt, read the records on its tablets, and finally wandered in the churchyard. Still, he was not satisfied. Finally, returning to the church, he asked the superannuated clerk to show him the marriage-register, putting a sovereign in his hand as he made the request.

"There's just a possibility that the couple came

here to get married," he thought. "Anyhow, as I am here, I'll know whether they did get married or not. He had a love-affair, as was proved by his frantic desire to reform. It'd do no harm to examine the register."

He made the examination, and discovered that Philip Ryve and Diana Paulet had been united in marriage upon the very day and scarcely an hour before the bridegroom had shot himself upon the beach.

With this knowledge, he returned to Leddiston, where he spent the night. He kept to himself the discovery he had made, and instigated careful inquiries concerning Diana Paulet, her history, her expectations, and her personal appearance.

Actuated by more than simple curiosity, he visited the country church near The Yews the next day, and witnessed Diana's marriage to Sir Hugh Redmond.

"She is married as Diana Paulet, spinster," he thought. "That secret wedding in the old church at Rosney Heath counts for nothing it seems. I wonder if this blonde baronet knows that she is a widow? I'll risk a fortune that my lady keeps that little fact to herself. I know the Redmonds. They are a proud stock. He'd never marry the widow of a criminal. No, she didn't tell him."

As a throng of country people proceeded to the Yews after the wedding he went also, anxious for another look at the bride, whom he had recognized as the girl whose marvellous beauty and loveliness had so attracted the attention and admiration of Lord Thorncombe and himself in Hyde Park three months before.

"So that very girl was Philip Ryve's wife?" he muttered. "Singular! Of all women in the world I could admire and love her most. Glorious Diana! I shall hope for a better acquaintance with your ladyship!"

He entered the lawn and stood near the gate of the gloomy old place in the shadow of one of the funeral yews from which Mr. Paulet's country seat took its name.

He watched the groups of country people and listened to the music of the wandering minstrel band. An hour passed. He was tired of waiting and was about to depart, when Diana, in her bridal robes, came to the window of her sitting-room and looked out.

His eyes met hers in a full gaze, and there was a peculiar significance in his stare that strengthened her conviction that he was Philip Ryve. And then he saw her fall upon her window sill helplessly, and knew that she had fainted.

Before Mr. Paulet had entered her chamber Piers Dalvell was striding over the heath in the direction of Wareham.

"My resemblance to Philip Ryve startled her out of her senses," he thought. "She knows that he's dead, else she might have taken me for him. Perhaps she thought that his ghost had risen from his grave to reproach her for her second marriage! Women are apt to be superstitious. I've stumbled upon a gold mine here in Dorsetshire. Sir Hugh Redmond—I know him very well, and he knows me. There's no love lost between us"—and Dalvell laughed evilly. "He is rich, and it will go hard but some of his money shall go to enrich me. Lord Thorncombe refuses to supply my wants. I have an expensive family on my hands. When a man begins to go down hill he doesn't stop at trifles. And so I—Dalvell of the clubs, Dalvell, the man of fashion—I shall apply to Lady Redmond as my banker in case of need! It will go hard if my own brother's widow cannot assist me when she is so rich! A regular gold mine, by Jove!"

(To be continued.)

A VERY extensive deposit of wild honey has been discovered in California. As the workmen on the Cajon Pass were hauling over some rocks they came across a deposit of honey, and taking a pole and running it into the mountain, were surprised to find no bottom. Upon withdrawing the pole the honey began to run out, and soon tubs, buckets, and two barrels were filled, and still it flowed. A portion of the rock was blown off, and tons upon tons of honey were disclosed. After exploring the cavity from below where the bees were found to enter it was found to extend one-fourth of a mile, and the opinion is that the whole cavity is filled with honey.

A DECEITFUL LOVELINESS.—Venice is called "The Beautiful City." It is beautiful, but alas! to an honest view of this pretty, womanly city there are two sides, for it is the most deceitful city in the world—a city of wide and wonderful contrasts. Venice is full of beauty, but full of ugliness also. It is full of gaiety, but overfull of want and unhappiness. The great attraction, however, to one who dwells long in Venice is the gentleness and the never-failing politeness of its people of all classes and conditions. Beautiful, beautiful

Venice! A dead and decaying city of cholera and half the diseases of the world, yet all the time as beautiful as any dream or picture. The beauty of a painted woman. A city sick at heart, full of decay and disease. A city of contrasts and contradictions. The city of art, history, and song, yet hollow and sad as a shell of the sea.

TOM AND I.

CHAPTER III.

I, NORAH BURTON, was hidden away in the deep window seat, where, myself unseen, I could command a view of the bed, which had been brought from the little recess, and now occupied the centre of my room.

On that bed, with a face as white as the pillows, save where the fever spot burned on either cheek, somebody was lying—somebody who looked like me, and yet was not I, though they called her Norah, and talked in whispers about the long strain upon her nerves, being so much alone; the long walk in the November mist and fog before she was able, and repeated wetting of her feet from the want of strong new shoes.

How queerly it all sounded; how curiously I watched the girl, who looked so young, lying there so still, with her hands folded always the same way, just over her breast, and her face turned a little toward me.

If she had ever been restless, and from what they said I judged she must have been, it was over now, and she lay like one dead, never moving so much as an eyelid, or paying the slightest heed to what was passing around her.

The Misses Keith and Mrs. Trevillian were never all together in the chamber now, though each came frequently, and Mrs. Trevillian always cried and asked, "Do you think she is any better? Will she live?" of the tall man who sat and watched the sick girl just as closely as I did, and who would answer, "Heaven knows," and again would shake his head mournfully, as if there was no hope.

How kind, and tender, and gentle he was—gentle, and tender, and kind as any woman—and I found myself wishing the girl could know he was there, and know how, when he was all alone, he kissed the pale little fingers, and smoothed the ruffled hair, and called, so soft and low, "Norah, Norah! don't you hear me? Don't you know old Tom?"

She did not hear, she did not know, and the pale fingers never stirred to the kiss he gave them, and only the breath from the parted lips told there still was life. How sorry I felt for them both, but, sorriest, I think, for the man, who seldom left the room, and sat always where he could see the white face on the pillow.

"Dear little face! dear little girl, I cannot let her die. Please, Heaven, spare her to me!" I heard him say once.

There then certainly was a fluttering of the eyelids—an effort like struggling back to life, and I think the girl in the bed wanted to tell the man in the chair that she heard him and appreciated all his watchful care.

But nature was too weak to rally, and after that one sign the sick girl lay quiet and motionless as ever, and only the ticking of the clock broke the deep silence of the room. I wondered did that ticking disturb her. It would have worried me, and I should have been for ever repeating the monotonous one-two, one-two which the pendulum seemed to be saying.

Did my thought communicate itself to her, the girl on my pillow, with a face like my face, and which yet was not mine? Perhaps, for she did at last move uneasily, and the pale lips whispered:

"One-two, one-two, it keeps going on for ever and ever, and makes me so tired. Stop it, Tom."

He knew what she meant, and the clock, which had not run down for years, was silenced at once, while Tom's face grew bright and hopeful, for she had spoken and called him by his name.

Outside there was the sound of carriage wheels stopping before the door, a pull at the bell, a hurried conversation in the hall below, Miss Keith's voice sounding hurried and confused, the other voice self-assured, surprised and commanding, and then footsteps came up the stairs, and Archie's mother, Mrs. Browning, was standing on the threshold, red, tired, panting, and taking in rapidly every portion of the room, from the cheap hearthrug and carpet to the tall man by the bedside and the pallid face on the pillows.

At sight of that her countenance changed sensibly, and she exclaimed:

"I did not suppose it so bad as this."

Then Tom, who had arisen from his seat, spoke a little sternly, for he was angry at the intrusion:

"Madame, don't you know Miss Burton is very sick and cannot see strangers?"

"Yes, I know," and Archie's mother pressed close to the girl on the pillow, trailing her India shawl on the floor directly across Tom's feet. "She was engaged to read to me every day for two hours, and I waited for her to come or send some message, till at last I concluded to drive round and see what had become of her. You are her cousin, I believe? I am Mrs. Browning."

She said the last name as if between Mrs. Browning and the cousin there was a vast difference, but if Tom recognized it he did not seem to notice it; he merely said:

"Yes, I am her cousin, and you were to have been her mother-in-law?"

"Yes, Archie was my son. If he had lived he would have been heir of Brierton Lodge; both the young lords are dead."

"Oh, yes, and my cousin would have been Lady Cleaver of Brierton Lodge?" Tom asked, and it seemed to me that he thought just as I did, namely, that the sick girl was of more importance to Mrs. Browning because of what she might have been.

The shadow of the honour she had missed reached even to this humble room, and made Mrs. Browning more gracious, more pitiful, more anxious than she might otherwise have been. And yet it was wholly the fault of her birth and education that she cared so much for these things.

At heart she was a thoroughly good woman, and there was genuine kindness in her inquiries of Tom as to what was needed most, and in her deportment towards the sick girl, whom she tried to rouse, calling her by name, and saying to her:

"I am Archie's mother; you remember Archie who died?"

There was a little sob in the mother's voice, but the girl gave no sign; only Tom looked gloomy and black, and intensely relieved when the India shawl was trailed down the stairs and the Browning carriage drove away.

Next day it stopped again before the house, and this time it held an added weight of dignity in the person of Lady Darinda Fenton, whose heavy silk rustled up the stairs, and whose large white hands were constantly rubbing each other as she talked to Tom, in whom she had recognized the Mr. Gordon seen once at Miss Elliston's where she was calling at the same time with himself.

"Really, Mr. Gordon, this is a surprise. I had no idea, I am sure, that Miss Barton was your cousin; really I am surprised. And she came near being my cousin, too. You must know about Archie?"

"Yes," and Tom bowed stiffly. "I had the honour of seeing him years ago when he visited my cousin. I went out to India just before he died."

"Yes, I see; and did not return until a few days since. It must have shocked you very much—the change in her circumstances. Poor girl, we never knew it until she came to us for employment. I am glad for her that you have come to care for her. She will live with you, of course, if you marry and settle here."

Lady Darinda, though esteeming herself highly bred, was much given to direct questionings which sometimes seemed impertinent. But Tom did not resent it in this case; he merely replied:

"My cousin will live with me when I am married, and I am happy to say she has so farthest need to look for employment of any kind. I shall take care of her."

Lady Darinda was so glad. Nor was it a sham gladness. The intimate friend of Miss Lucy Elliston, she had heard much of "the Mr. Gordon who had saved Charlie's life, and who was of the Gordon stock, and a thorough gentleman." She had also felt a kindly interest in the girl who had almost been Lady Cleaver, and that interest was increased when she knew her to be a near connexion of Miss Elliston's Mr. Gordon. The time might come when it would do to speak of her and possibly present her to her friends, and she made many anxious inquiries concerning her, and talked so rapidly and so loud that the head on the pillow moved as if disturbed, and Tom was glad when the lady at last gathered herself up to leave. She was still nervously rubbing her jewelled hands, and Tom's attention was attracted to a solitaire of great brilliancy, the same I had observed the day I sat in her reception-room, and she stood talking to me and rubbing her hands just as she was rubbing them now. Suddenly and as if her mind was made up she drew off the ring, and bending over the sick girl pushed it upon the fourth finger of the left hand, saying to Tom as she did so:

"The ring is here, and she ought never to have parted with it. I don't know why she sent it back to us, but she did, just after Archie died, and as his cousin I kept it, but wish for her to have it again, and I fancy she is too proud to take it if she knew."

I must go, now, but will come again soon, or send to inquire. By-the-bye, shall I see you at Miss Elliston's to-night at the the musicale? Lucy will be greatly disappointed, if you do not come."

"I shall not leave my cousin while she is sick," was Tom's reply, and with a loud spoken good-by, Lady Darinda left the little room which she had seemed to fill so full with her large, tall person and voluminous skirts.

Scarcely was she gone, when Tom took in his own, the pale little hand where the solitaire was sparkling, looked at it a moment, then gently withdrew it, put it in his pocket-book, with a muttered something I could not quite understand. Then the girl on the pillow began to grow restless, and her fever came on, and Tom said there had been too much talking in the room, and no one must be admitted except the Misses Keith and Mrs. Trevillian, and across the window they hung a heavy curtain to exclude the light, and so to me everything became a blank, and I knew no more of what was passing until one bright December morning when I awoke suddenly to find myself in the bed where the sick girl had lain.

I was very weak and languid, and very much bewildered as I tried to recall the past, and remember what had happened. It was something like the awakening after Archie died, only, in place of the dear old Aunt Esther here was a tall, brown man looking down upon me, with so much kindness and anxiety in his eyes that without knowing at all who he was, I tried to put out my hand, as I said: "You are very, very good, I'll tell Tom about it."

"Nora, Nora, I am Tom. Don't you know me?" and his great warm hands were laid on mine as he bent over me with his eager questioning. "Don't you know me, Nora? I am Tom." I did know him then, and I said:

"Yes, I know you, and I've been very ill; it must have been the leaky boots which kept my feet so cold and wet. Where are they, Tom?"

"Burned up, Nora. I did it myself in the kitchen range, and you have in their place twelve pairs of the neatest little gaiters you ever saw, waiting for your feet to be able to wear them. Shall I show them to you now?"

He did not wait for me to answer, but dashed into the recess adjoining, and bringing out the boots, tumbled them all upon the bed where I could see them. Twelve pairs of boots, of every style and make! Walking boots, morning boots, calling boots, prunella boots, bronze boots, French calf-skin boots, and what was very strange, a dainty pair of white satin boots, which laced so very high and were so pretty to look at. I think these pleased me more than all the others, though I had no idea as to when or where I could wear them.

A handsome boot was one of my weaknesses, and he had been a dozen years of them, and I laughed as a child would over a box of toys. He let me enjoy them a few moments, and then took them away, telling me I was not to get too tired, and how glad he was that I was better, and able to recognize him. I had been sick three weeks he said, and he had been with me all the time, except when he went out for a short time each day.

"You have been out of your head," he said, "and insisted that you were sitting over in the window, and that somebody else was here in bed, and that I was a big bear. What do you think of me now?"

I looked at him closely, and saw that the heavy overcoat and coarse sea clothes had given place to garments of the most fashionable kind, which fitted him admirably and gave him quite a distinguished air, while his hair and beard were cut and trimmed after the most approved style of Hyde Park and Rotten Row at the height of the season. He was a man to be noticed anywhere, and after inspecting him a moment, I said:

"I think you are very nice, and very handsome, and I am so glad you have come home."

This was a great deal to say at once in my feeble state, and he saw how tired I was, and bade me not talk any more, and drew the covering about me and tucked it in, and brought me a clean handkerchief and laid it on my pillow, and did it all as deftly and handsomely as any woman could have done.

Oh, those first days of getting better, how happy they were, and how delightful it seemed to be made much of, and petted, and waited on as if I were a princess.

Archie's mother called two or three times, and was very kind to me, and said once as she was leaving:

"You will hardly come to me now as we had agreed upon."

"Oh, yes, I shall," I replied. "I must get to work again as soon as I am able."

Then Tom came forward and said, in a quiet decided way, as if he had a right:

"My cousin will not go out any more. She is my care now."

That was so like Tom; and I let him have his way with Mrs. Browning, but was just as firm in my determination to care for myself. I had not forgotten what he had said about being married, nor had I any doubt that he meant to marry Miss Elliston, and, if so, our lives must necessarily drift very far apart. But it was so nice to have him all to myself just now, and I enjoyed it to the full, and let him wait on me as much as he liked, and took gladly what he brought me, flowers and hothouse plants, and books of engravings for me to look at, and books, which he read aloud to me while I lay on my pillows, or sat in my great arm-chair and watched him as he read, and wondered at, and rejoiced over, and felt glad and proud of the change in his appearance. I think he was, without exception, the finest-looking man I ever saw, and Mrs. Trevillian quite agreed with me, always excepting, of course her George. She was with me a great deal during my convalescence, and one morning when Tom was out she came with a radiant face, which I knew portended some good news. Miss Elliston had actually called—that is, she had come to the door in her carriage, sent in her card, and with an invitation to a large party to be given the next week.

"And are you going?" I asked; and she replied: "Certainly I am. I think it was real snipping in her not to call herself, but then I can excuse something on the score of old acquaintance, and I must wear that lovely silk before it gets quite out of fashion. She wrote me a little note, saying it was to be a grand affair—quite a crash. I can hardly wait to see it."

Just then Tom came in, and the conversation ceased, though I felt tempted to tell him I knew of the party. He was going, of course, and I felt a little hurt that he did not speak to me about it. He might have done as much as that, I thought; but he did not until the very day, when he said to me, late in the afternoon:

"I have an engagement to-night, Mouney. Miss Elliston gives a large party, and as she has deferred it until I could be present, I think I ought to go."

"Yes, certainly, by all means," I said; and then, when he was gone, I was silly enough to cry, and to think hard things of Miss Elliston, who was so rich and happy in everything.

When Mrs. Trevillian was dressed she came to let me look at her, and I thought I had never seen anything as lovely as she was in pink silk, and lace, and pearls, with her sunny blue eyes and golden hair.

"You will be the belle of the party," I said; but she shook her head, laughingly, and replied:

"I tell you to-morrow."

Alas! when the morrow came, the little lady's plumes were drooping, and her spirits a good deal ruffled. Tom was late in his visits that morning, and so she had ample time to tell me all about it.

"Such a jam!" she said, "and it had taken half an hour for their carriage to get up to the house, then another half-hour to push her way to the dressing-room and down again to the drawing-room, where Miss Elliston just touched her hand and said good evening, and then she was shoved on to a corner, where she and George stood, entirely surrounded by strangers, and feeling more alone than if they had been in the desert. When the dancing commenced it was better, for the parlours thinned out and she was able to walk and look about a little, but nobody spoke to her or noticed her in any way, and she was not introduced to a single individual, until the lion of the evening, the man who received so much attention from everybody, accidentally stumbled upon her and was so kind and good. And who do you suppose it was? I was never more astonished in my life. And they say he is to marry Miss Elliston. It is quite a settled thing, I heard. Your cousin, Mr. Gordon—and that was his photograph, though not very natural; at least, I did not recognize him from it."

"The picture was taken three or four years ago," I said, "and Tom says it was never a good one."

"Then you did know all the time that he was Miss Elliston's Mr. Gordon, and you never told me?" Mrs. Trevillian cried, in a slightly aggrieved tone of voice.

"I knew he was her brother's friend," I said, "but not till after he came home. Is she so very handsome?"

"Why, yes, I think she is, or at least she has a style and high-bred air better than mere beauty. Last night she was all in white, with blush roses on her dress and in her hair, and when she walked or danced with Mr. Gordon everybody remarked what a splendid couple they were, she so tall and graceful and he so big and prince-like. Did you know they were engaged?"

She put the question direct, and I know my cheeks were scarlet as I replied:

"I supposed—yes, I—Tom told me he came home to be married; that's all I know."

I was taking my breakfast, and my hand shook so that I spilled my chocolate over the clean napkin and dropped my egg-spoon into my lap.

There was an interval of silence, and then the impulsive little lady burst out:

"I say, Miss Burton, it's too bad. Here I'd been building a castle for you, and behold Lucy Elliston is to be his mistress. I don't like her as well as I did, I'm free to say, for I do not think she treated me as she should at the party; never introducing me to a person, or even speaking to me till just as I was leaving, when she was so glad I came, and hoped I had not found it very dull among so many strangers, and then, Miss Burton—I despise a tale-bearer—but I will tell you what I heard. I was standing by myself in a little window above, and Lucy came along with a tall, large woman, whom I think she called Lady Fenton. They did not see me, and after the conversation commenced I dared not show myself, so I kept still and heard them talk of you."

"Of me?" I exclaimed; and she continued:

"Of you; yes, Lady Fenton said:

"What a splendid fellow he is, and how he wins the people. I almost envy you, Lucy, if you do marry him. By the way, do you know his cousin, Miss Burton? Was she invited to-night?"

"No," Lucy said. "I've never called upon her. She teaches music, you know. I saw her in Paris with one of her pupils; rather pretty, but no style. You never saw her, of course!"

"Yes, I have," and I fancied Lady Fenton spoke a little hotly. "I know all about her, and she is as nice as she can be, and a lady too. She was to have married Cousin Archie, who died, and if she had she would have been Lady Cleaver, of Briarton Lodge, now. She has been very sick; did you know that?"

"Yes, I should think so, for that has kept Mr. Gordon from us so much, and Charlie was so vexed, for he needed amusing himself. I trust she will soon be well. Is she really nice and a lady?"

"Yes, every whit a lady, and I advise you to cultivate her as once."

From where I sat I could see Miss Elliston distinctly, and saw her give a little shrug which she picked up ahead, and which always irritates me. Lady Fenton must have understood its meaning, for she went on:

"Mr. Gordon is evidently very fond of his cousin and looks upon her as a sister, and—"

"How do you know that? How do you know he is very fond of her?" Miss Elliston asked, quickly, and I saw in a moment she was jealous of you. And when Lady Fenton told of her call when you were sick, and of his devotion to you, and added, 'He will undoubtedly expect her to live with you when you are married,' she gave another shoulder shrug, and said:

"Cele depend, I have not married him yet, and, if I should I do not propose marrying his entire family. This girl is not of the Gordon blood."

"What more they would have said I do not know, for just then some dancers came out to cool themselves, and behind them Mr. Gordon, looking for Lucy, who took his arm with such a sweet smile and air of possession, and I heard her say to him:

"Lady Fenton has been telling me such nice things about your cousin. I wish you would bring her to see me; I am so busy and have so many engagements, I think she might waive ceremony with me."

"What did Tom reply?" I asked, and Mrs. Trevillian said:

"I did not hear his answer; but, mark my words, she'll make a fool of him, and he will be asking you to call on her. But don't you do it, and don't you live with them either."

"I never shall," was my answer.

And as Tom's step was heard in the hall just then, Mrs. Trevillian left me to receive his visit alone.

He looked tired and ennui'd, and was absent-minded and moody for him, while I, too, was very reticent, and never once mentioned the party, until he said:

"I met Mrs. Trevillian as I came up. She told you about the party last night, I suppose."

"Yes," I answered.

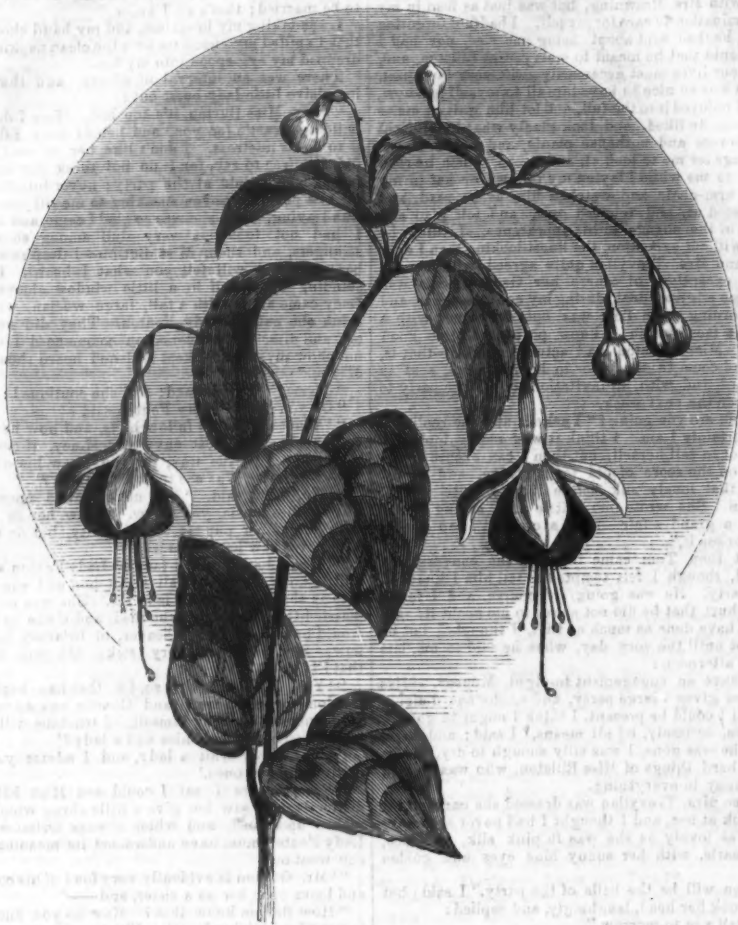
And he continued:

"What did she say of Miss Elliston? They are old friends, I believe."

"Yes; they knew each other in Ireland. She said she was very pretty and stylish, and so lovely last night in white, with blush roses—"

"Yes," Tom replied, evidently wishing to hear something more.

(To be continued.)



[THE FUCHSIA.]

FLOWERS: THEIR LANGUAGE, SENTIMENT, SYMBOLS AND INTERPRETATION.

By PHILANTHOS.

VOCABULARY.

FRITILLARY, CHEQUERED. (*Fritillaria Meleagris*).
Persecution.

The Common Fritillary, or Snakeshead, a large-flowered plant, allied to the tulips, narcissuses, daffodils and lilies, is easily recognized by its narrow, lance-shaped, pointed leaves and its bold, reddish-brown single flower, nodding a foot in height over the grass of the meadow, and bearing a fanciful resemblance to a snake's head. A field, through which there is a footpath, leading from Kew across to Mortlake, in Surrey, has the name of Snakeshead Meadow, on account of the quantity of this curious flower, which is chequered in even squares of darker red-brown than the rest of the flower, resembling a draught-board. It used to be called Turkey-hen-flower and Guinea-hen-flower by some old writers on account of its markings. Its usual colours are pale and dark purple, but occasionally it is found of a greenish white. It has been called also the Chequered Daffodil and Chequered Narcissus. The Crown Imperial (*Fritillaria Imperialis*) is a bold, showy, bulbous flower, very handsome, a yard or more high, and blooming in April, but of an offensive, fox-like smell, with colours varying from sulphur-yellow to orange-red. The Dutch Crown Imperial (*Fritillaria Maxima*) is still taller, and may be propagated by separating its bulbs every fourth year and planting out eight or ten inches deep. Varieties may be obtained by sowing the seeds when they are ripe.—(See Lily.)

FROM OPHEYS. Disgust.—See Orchis.

FUCHSIA. Taste.

Thou graceful flower, on graceful stem,
Of Flora's gifts my favourite gem!
From tropic fields thou can'st to cheer
The natives of a climate drear;
And grateful for our fostering care,
Hast learnt our wintry blast to bear.

This elegant native of Chili, named after Leonard Fuchs, an old German botanist of the sixteenth century, is well chosen as the emblem of Taste. It is odd, however, that neither the flower nor its symbolic interpretation find a place in Tyas's book.

We need hardly describe the Fuchsia, which, in its grander varieties, is one of the most graceful and tasteful plants in the aristocratic conservatory; and, whether in its slender or robust form, growing out of doors or in the flower-pot, is one of the most beautiful of adornments of the humbler dwelling. The Fuchsia family has not been domiciled in England for more than about seventy years. Its first recorded specimen, the *Fuchsia coccinea* was treated as a stove plant about that period at the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew. Now it thrives and blooms anywhere and everywhere, especially in the south and west of England and in the Isle of Wight, where it seems yearly to increase in strength and beauty.

All the Fuchsias cultivated here were originally natives of South America. Ruiz and Pavon ("Flora Peruviana") describe the *Fuchsia corymbiflora* as growing to the height of a man and loaded with bunches of magnificent flowers, the tubes of a clear bright rose-colour, the lips boldly recurved and disclosing petals of the rich and brilliant carmine. The *Fuchsia splendens* is the hardiest of the native race. Hartwig found it in flower on one lofty mountain, 10,000 feet above the sea-level, that is about 5,000 feet lower than the topmost peak of Mont Blanc.

The cultivation of the Fuchsia is easy. Any light rich mould suits them, with no stint of water, and the weakest liquid manure. They strike readily from cuttings under a hand-light; and as hybrids are produced by the cross impregnation of

the various species it is a capital plant for the amateur to amuse himself with, as the Fuchsia has in this way an endless variety. Its blossoms, of the richest crimson dye, are thus changed into cerise, purple, a delicate cream-colour, etc., etc., and its graceful flowers of whatever hue they may be, with their bold clusters of stamens and pistils, challenge the poet's praise and the admiration of the florist.

Beautiful child of a tropic sun,
How hast thou been from thy far home won,
To bloom in our chilly northern air,
Where the frost may blight or the wind may tear?

Dost thou not pine for thine own dear land—
For its cloudless skies, for its zephyr bland,
For its graceful flowers of matchless hues,
Bright as the dreams of an Eastern muse?

Dost thou not pine for the perfumed air,
For the gorgeous birds that are hovering
there;
For the starry skies and the silver moon,
And the grasshopper's shrill and unchanging
tune?

Doth thy modest head as mockly bend
In thine own bright clime, or doth exile lend
To thy fragile stalk its drooping grace,
Like the downcast look of a lovely face?

No, thou would'st murmur, were language
thine,
It is not for these I appear to pine;
Nor for glorious flowers, nor cloudless skies,
Nor yet for the plumage of rainbow dyes.

The kindly care I have met with here,
The dew that is soft as affection's tear,
Would have soothed if sorrow had bent my
head
For the sunny land where our race was bred.

But I do not pine, and I do not grieve.
Why should I mourn for the things I leave?
I feel the sun and the gladsome air,
And all places are joyous if they be there.

And thus in the world we may happy be
Not in climate, nor valley, nor islet free,
But wherever the tenderest love in our breast
May have objects around it on which it can
rest.

FULLER'S TEASEL. (*Dipsacus Fullonum*). Mis-
anthropy.—See Teasel.

FUMITORY. (*Fumaria Capitata*. *Fumaria offi-*
cialis). Spleen.

The Ramping Fumitory and Common Fumitory with pale pink or rosecoloured flowers may alike be taken as the symbols of Spleen. Both sorts are common annuals in hedges, by roadsides, in cornfields and in gardens. The name of Fumitory in English, "Fume de Terre" in French, and "Fumaria" in Latin, all point to one derivation, and we find this weed called Earth-smoke in old writers. It is derived from "fumus" smoke—the smoke of Fumitory being used by sorcerers to exorcise evil spirits. John Clare, the Northamptonshire poet, says:—

And Fumitory, too, a name
Which superstition hands to fame,

Shakespeare included Fumitory among noxious weeds:—

Her fallow leas
The darnel, hemlock, and rank Fumitory
Do root upon: while that the coulter rusts
That should deracinate such savagery,

Fumitory blossoms early in the year, and flowers till August. The Common Fumitory is found in cornfields and dry pastures, but is said not to be indigenous, though one of the commonest of weeds. Its flowers are smaller than the Ramping Fumitory, and it has medicinal uses as a tonic. The *Corydalis claviculata*, one of the *Fumaria* family, is a delicate climbing plant with small white flowers, growing in shady situations flowering in June and July. I had a large lemon-coloured *Corydalis* (*C. lutea*) in flower in my garden in May and June among some chalk-flints. It was very pretty and quite yellow enough for an emblem of Spleen.

FURZE, or GORSE. (*Ulex Europæus*). Enduring Love. Love for all seasons.

We have already spoke of the Plantagenet Broom, the historical "plante-de-genet," the emblem of Humility; we now come to speak of the hardy Furze, Gorse, or Whin, as the symbol of Enduring Love.

Perhaps no plant is more broadly characteristic of English climate and open country scenery than the "yellow Whin." Its natural habit is to grow on dry

exposed commons where in, the flowering season it covers the landscape with a sheet of gorgeous golden blossoms, entirely concealing its meagre, spinous, and almost unsightly awl-shaped leaves and stony branches. The structure of its blossoms is what the botanists call papilionaceous (butterfly-shaped).

Dr. Paley has a delightful reflection on the contrivance of the blossom. After advertizing to the importance of protecting the parts of fructification in a plant (they are usually lodged in the heart of the blossom) he says, "the pea, or papilionaceous tribe, enclose these parts within a beautiful folding of the internal blossoms, sometimes called, from its shape, the boat or keel, itself also protected under a pent-house formed of the external petal. This structure is very artificial, and, what adds to the value of it, though it may diminish the curiosity, very generally it has also this farther advantage, and it is one advantage strictly mechanical, that the blossoms turn their backs to the wind whenever the gale blows strongly enough to endanger the delicate parts on which the seed depends. I have observed this a hundred times in a field of peas in blossom. It is an aptitude which results for the figure of the flower, and, as I have said, is strictly mechanical, as much as the turning of a weathercock, or the tin cap on the top of a chimney."

We have two species of Whin, the dwarf, or winter Furze (*Ulex nanus*), and the Common Furze (*Ulex Europæus*), but for our Flower Language they will both serve the same purpose. The last-named always seems to bear one or two lingering blossoms, while the dwarf Furze flowers only in the autumnal or winter months, beginning to bloom in August and flowering until January. The branches of the Common Furze are at certain seasons so soft and succulent that cattle are fond of them.

It is a curious fact that hardy as is the Whin, Linnaeus, who worshipped it for its beauty, strove in vain to make it grow in Sweden. Other northern botanists have spoken rapturously of the beauty of our Whin, and in St. Petersburg its cultivation is confined to the greenhouse, and it is admired for "its fragrance and grace."

There is a double variety of Whin on the hilly heaths in Devonshire, which is exceedingly rich in bloom.

The Gorse is yellow on the heath.

The banks with speedwell flowers are gay,
The oaks are budding, and beneath
The hawthorn soon will bear its wreath,
The silver wreath of May.

The Furze has many uses: the poor in the neighbourhood of commons use it for fuel, throwing out great heat, and it makes a good hedge for light purposes. Many animals live on Furze-tops, and its seeds are a granary for birds. In autumn, when the seedvessels are ripe, they crack with a report and discharge their contents; a rural sound which has been noted by the poet:—

On the lone moor where hares abound,
Where throbbing Furzes, heat-struck, burst their pods,
Scattering ripe seeds amid the crop around.

In conclusion I may note that this hardy and seemingly well-armed plant is often the victim of that peculiar parasite the Dodder, or Strangle-weed, the Emblem of Baseness and Meanness, which thus attacks the Symbol of Enduring Love.

To be continued.

ROCK OIL.—It is a singular fact, but none the less true, that a great deal of distress has been caused of late by the excessive richness or fatness of American soil. The oil speculators in New York have been reduced to the verge of despair by the discovery of numerous petroleum wells, and the abundance of oil in all parts of Pennsylvania has brought them face to face with ruin. They have petroleum enough on hand to last the world six months at least, and have been holding it up for higher prices, but the new discoveries will force them to lower their pretensions very materially. The oil regions of Pennsylvania seem to be inexhaustible.

FRAGRANCE OF FLOWERS.—We were walking in the garden among the flowers. My companion stopped by a border, principally of large carnation poppies. "Oh!" says he, "what beautiful, what splendid flowers! But why do you not destroy those miserable weeds that are so thickly and offensively occupy the interstices of the border?" "Wait till evening and I will tell you," I replied. We walked to the same place again in the evening. "Oh! what delicious fragrance! How delicate, how sweet! Whence this delightful sweetness?" inquired my friend. "That, sir," I replied, "is the fragrance of that miserable weed which you would have had me destroy this morning, and in it you have the answer to your question. That is the lovely mignonette, and now where are your beautiful,

splendid flowers, the poppies? In the morning they were here in all the ostentation of splendid robes, but where are they now? Scattered over the walks. The sun shone upon them and the gentle breeze came and they were gone, leaving neither beauty nor fragrance behind. But this little plant, the appearance of which was so offensive to you this morning, now fills the very air with rich fragrance. The one is the glare and ostentation of external show, the other the richness of mind and the sweetness of modesty."

NINA'S SACRIFICE.

PEARL CAREW stood in the large flower garden of Carew Manor, and looked, with dreamy, happy eyes over the violet, twilight landscape, to where the blue vault of sky was gemmed with golden stars.

All round her were beds and parterres of beautifully laid-out flowers. Roses of every hue, full of gorgeous bloom, tiny blue forget-me-nots, great, slender, golden-hearted lilies, white and queenly, rich purple and crimson fuchsias, velvet, purplish pansies, climbing jessamine—flowers of every description, of choice variety and purest bloom—flowers in unlimited quantity and profusion, sweet scented and odorous.

Among all this floral beauty stood Pearl Carew, fair as the fairest rose, pure as the whitest lily.

Her face was delicate and ovaly-formed, her eyes blue and tender, and her tresses of soft brown hair waved back from a childish brow of snowy whiteness.

As she gazed on the fair scene before her a soft, sweet smile stole over her pretty lips, a dewy tearfulness came into the azure eyes.

"How happy I am!" she murmured. "I shall soon see my beloved Laurence again—my darling Laurence!"

A soft rustle fell on the gravelled walk beside her, and a clear, bird-like trilling laugh rang out on the evening air.

"My darling Laurence!" cried the new comer, in playful mockery. "Oh, Pearl, Pearl! Are you sighing for your Laurence? Has he not come yet?"

She trailed her falling robe of black crape to where Pearl was standing, and twined her white arms around the latter's waist.

"No, Nina, Laurence has not come. I hope he will not delay much longer. I am tired of waiting," murmured Pearl, tremulously.

"Tardy lover that he is!" cried Nina, with another laugh. "Do you know, Pearl, I am very curious concerning this lover of yours—this paragon of manly beauty? Is he so very handsome?"

"Handsome!" she repeated, clasping her hands together. "Handsome! Yes, Nina, Laurence is handsome, beautiful as an Adonis; but it is not that alone that attracts me to him; he is good and noble, tender and true. He is too high-souled to stoop to a mean action. And, Nina, Nina! he loves me—poor, simple little me."

"Poor, simple little you! Well, I never! Why, Pearl, how can you speak so of yourself? For my part, I don't believe that Mr. Laurence St. Clair is half worthy of my pretty cousin," said Nina, half-smiling, half-sad.

"Not worthy of me! Oh, Nina, wait until you see him! Not worthy of me! Ah! I wish I were more worthy of him—my hero, my king! Nina, if any one should come between us, and take his love from me, I would die—die, Nina, without even accusing him of fickleness—die, loving him to the last—blessing him with my latest breath."

"Pearl, your love is not of human mould—it is of birth divine. Ah, how I long for the love of at least one true heart—the devotion of a high-minded soul! I envy you, Pearl; my heart hungers for the love that you are blessed with."

Poor Nina! She little knew how soon her wishes were to be fulfilled! Her fate was nearing her every moment; and when her path would be flooded with the light of love she little knew how she would wish that she had never seen its rays.

Pearl drew nearer to her cousin, and pressed a loving kiss on her quivering mouth.

"Nina, darling, my dear, beautiful Nina, you deserve to be far happier than I—and you will be. Some day you will meet your ideal—a man as noble as Laurence St. Clair—a man who will bow in devotion and love at your feet, and awaken in your bosom the all-inspiring passion of love. And then you too will be happy and blessed."

"Happy and blessed! Ah, Pearl, shall I ever be that? No, I tell you that the cup of bliss which you quaff is not for me—never, ah, never!" said Nina, despairingly.

"Yes, Nina, such is for you. Your cup will be overflowing with happiness—you will be crowned with love divine," said Pearl.

A wintery smile passed over Nina's lips.

"You are fond of building castles in the air, Pearl—castles that are delightfully fair, but false and unreal. My future I cannot see, and do not care to see. I will await in patience whatever fate mine will be."

"I trust it will be as fair as mine seems to me, now. Oh, Nina, surely I am blest among women. I will show my gratitude to Heaven by praising and hallowing the precious gift bestowed on me—I will make Laurence a pure and loving wife—I will try to make him happy. His least wish will be law with me."

"You will be a model wife, Pearl," said Nina, sarcastically.

"Yes, for my Laurence deserves a woman who will adore and worship him as I do," replied Pearl, not noticing the sarcasm in her cousin's words and voice.

All scorn vanished from Nina's face at the wistful smile Pearl gave. A mild expression irradiated her countenance, and a soft light came into her lovely eyes. In a low voice she murmured, sweetly:

"Dearest Pearl, I wish you all the future happiness and joy you can have. I hope no cloud will ever darken your path of roses. I wish you all bliss, all peace, all light!"

Pearl was about to reply when the clatter of a horse's hoofs was heard on the carriage drive, and, a moment later, a gentleman in full military costume rode up to the gate, dismounted, and threw the reins to an attendant groom. With hurried steps he came forward, and Pearl, with a low cry of joy, went towards him and was clasped in his arms. Oh the joy of that blissful moment! She felt his hand wandering caressingly over her tresses as in the days of yore; she felt his tender kisses on her lips and brow, and, forgetful of everything save that Laurence was with her again, she lay in his arms in a trance of waking bliss.

"My dear little sweetheart, how beautiful you have grown!"

His well-remembered tones fell on her ear, and she withdrew from his loving embrace with burning blushes.

"I am glad for your sake, Laurence," she whispered, and then, suddenly remembering Nina, she turned to her cousin. "Laurence," she said, "this is my Cousin Nina. Miss Rivers, this is my betrothed, Mr. St. Clair."

Nina Rivers looked up into Laurence St. Clair's handsome face, with its fine dark eyes, high, thoughtful brow, gentle yet firmly set mouth, grandly noble expression—looked up and knew that she at last had met her fate, her hero, her king, in Pearl's betrothed husband.

She looked up and loved him with a love

That was her doom.

Oh, the sorrow that that new-born passion cost her—the grief, the agony, the sacrifice!

And Laurence? He looked down into the lovely upturned face, and knew at last what true, divine love was.

The sentiment Pearl Carew cherished for her lover was not kindled likewise in his bosom. He liked Pearl—liked her after a brotherly, protecting fashion.

It was his dead father's wish that he should marry Pearl Carew, and Laurence had obeyed the bequest, and engaged himself to the enraptured Pearl, though he did not love her.

Love! The feeling he entertained for her was as a faint, waning light compared to the blazing flash of a burning meteor, in the strength of the sudden passion that glowed in his soul as he gazed upon Nina River's face, and took her small, perfectly-shaped hand in his.

What a face it was! Beautiful, and lit with a grave, subdued tenderness, full of sentiment and passion, pure and fine in its exquisite lines of beauty.

Laurence thought it an angel's face, rather than a mortal woman's. Her eyes were large, deep and violet-hued, with a strange golden light shining in their soulful depths.

Her lips, exquisitely curved and out, were sweet and tender, yet capable of settling into grave, thoughtful lines. Her expression and smile were full of a peculiar charm, and formed one of her many graces.

What wonder that beside this Titianesque beauty Pearl Carew's childish prettiness faded into utter insignificance?

Laurence conversed with the two girls, and every time he heard the grave yet strangely piquant tones of Nina he experienced a delightful thrill.

But better, alas! had he never beheld that wistful face and form, for they were already beginning to play dangerous havoc with his peace of mind.

"Nina! My beautiful Nina! I can conceal it no longer—I love you, my darling! Oh, Nina, I cannot live without you!"

He stood beside her in the moonlight-flooded drawing-room, looking down on her with a wishful, longing look in his fine eyes, clasping her trembling hands in both of his. In a calm, passionless voice, that did not betray the awful anguish that convulsed her soul, she said:

"Launce, this is wrong; you must leave me and you will stay and be true to your plighted troth. I cannot stay here; this mortal agony is killing me. Oh, Launce, how I wish I had never met you!" she wailed, her calmness deserting her and leaving her weak and tearful.

"The meeting has caused great misery to both of us, Nina. I love you, and dare not wed you—but must marry one for whom I do not feel a particle of real love."

"Launce, if you proved false to Pearl she would die—for I know she loves you better than her life—and then you would have the base of murder on your soul."

"But, Nina, how can I give you up?"

"If I can make the sacrifice, Launce—I, a weak woman—surely you can."

"Yes, Nina, I can and will. For your sake—not for hers—I will marry Pearl Carew, and lead a loveless life," he said, bitterly.

"Not loveless—dear Launce, murmured Nina, softly; 'not loveless, for Pearl loves you.'"

"Yes, she loves me, but what is that? I do not love her," he retorted, passionately.

"You must try and love her, Launce—try and appreciate her pure devotion—and forget me—forget you ever met or beheld me."

"Never, Nina!" he breathed, in a low, intense tone. "Never! To the hour of my death I will cherish your memory, and love you, even though I wed another."

"Oh, Launce, that I had never met you! What terrible suffering I should have been saved from!" wailed Nina.

"Nina, Nina! My poor, wounded dove."

He clasped her tightly in his arms, and rained passionate kisses on the pale, lovely face. She struggled in his embrace, and, loosening his clasp, glided silently to the door—and turned. Never will Launcelet St. Clair forget the mute anguish of that marble-like countenance—the yearning look in the violet eyes—the agonized expression of her lips.

"Launce, my love, farewell for ever!"

She was gone. Launce dropped into a chair, and, burying his face in his hands, groaned in agony.

"Farewell," he muttered, "to all my fair hopes and short, brief love-dream. The future lies before me—a blank, dreary waste; but I will follow her desires; her sacrifice is not in vain. I will try and do a husband's duty by Pearl Carew, but I cannot love her; my love all belongs to another—my angel Nina!"

Five years sped on the wings of time—five long years. During all this time Nina Rivers had never seen Launce but once—only once!

He was driving in a fashionable park with his wife, Pearl. He did not see Nina, for she crouched back in her carriage, and hid her face among the silk cushions.

Now five years had gone by, and, after the long weary years of unutterable longing and waiting, he stood before her again.

"Nina, I am free. Pearl died two years ago. I did not come to you before, out of respect to her memory. She made me a good, true wife, Nina, and made my existence as happy as she could. She never guessed or knew of my secret. Poor Pearl! she believed I loved her, and, Nina, I could not undo her—she was so trusting and fragile, so loving and happy. She is dead—I am free once more. Nina, will you be my wife?" he pleaded, passionately.

Her answer beamed in her deep, violet eyes as they met his yearning gaze; her cheeks glowed like red June roses, she bent her beautiful head on his shoulder, and whispered:

"Yes."

Nina's sacrifice was not in vain; now she reaped her reward. She had done justice to Pearl, and was happy in the consciousness of the fact and in her Launcelet's love. Happy and blest at last—noble, deserving Nina.

H. F. J.

VIRTUE IN WHISTLING.—An old farmer once said he would not have a man on his farm who did not habitually whistle. He always hired whistlers—said he never knew a whistling labourer to find fault with his food, his bed, or complain of any little extra work he was asked to perform. Such a man was generally kind to children and to animals in his care. He would whistle a chilled lamb into warmth and life, and would bring his hat full of eggs from the barn without breaking one of them. He found such a man more careful about closing gates, putting up bars, and seeing that the nuts on his plough were

all properly tightened before he took it into the field. He never knew a whistling man to kick or beat a cow, nor drive her in a run into a stable. He had noticed that the sheep he fed in the yard and shed gathered around him as he whistled, without fear. He never had employed a whistler who was not thoughtful and economical.

CANDOUR.

Yes, what a fine thing it is; but one can't be quite candid always. It would be, to say the least, inconvenient. You wouldn't like it yourself. People would be more interesting than they are now, if we started out to be candid, but how horribly unpolite we should all be; and we must be civil at all risks. For instance, at that party the other day, Mr. Dancer said to you, "I presume you are enjoying yourself very much?" and you said, "Oh, very much indeed! What a lovely walk!" and he smiled, and you smiled.

What would candour have done? It would have made him say, "Well, here you are playing wail-flower, and what a stupid affair this is to be sure," and you would have replied, "It is perfectly dreadful. I wish it was time to go home; and why do you show all your teeth at me that way? That isn't a smile, and you don't feel a bit inclined to smile, either; you know you don't!" How true it would have been, yet any auditors would have thought you both mad.

When Mrs. Friabee calls on you, or you on her, and one of you asks the stereotyped question, "Why haven't you been to see me before?"—if the other should reply, "Well, because I don't want to come, and I only come now because it is the custom to make these routine calls and because you are one of the people it is well to know. You are as well aware as I am that you don't love me, nor I you one bit," that would be frightful, wouldn't it? Still you know it all the same—both of you.

Again, you of the sterner sex, who have made up your mind to marry, where would your chances be if you were to say to rich Miss Moneybags, "I hear that you have a snug little income. I don't like you as well as I do some other girls, but I owe a lot of debts and am in a lot of scrapes, and I think if you marry me you'll help me out of them; and so I offer my hand and all there is left of my heart, which certainly is not much; and I honestly think that my charms and graces, and fascination—for I'm a fellow all the women are in love with—will be interest for the use of your hard cash."

Of course you would have no chance at all, but with those thoughts in your heart you say something sweet to her, and talk about being happy together, and so win her, poor girl. No, candour wouldn't do for you. Don't you feel glad it is not the fashion? for you must be fashionable or die.

A FEELING COMMON TO ALL.

THE feeling of anxiety from time to time must ever invade the bosoms of those who are deeply immersed in the cares of life, and exhibit a restless concern for the good things of the world; who are continually busy themselves in framing notable objects, eager in following their pursuits, and constantly reckoning on future success.

No man, be he however sanguine, can promise himself continued enjoyment and undisturbed security. For is there not proof enough to everyone who makes use of his eyes there is a perpetual vicissitude of things, and that changes and chances are happening daily in the world, in every rank of life—in any pitch of power and greatness, so that no man can boast himself free from the giddy turns and shocks of fortune.

All worldly prosperity is owing to so many concurring circumstances, is liable to so many casualties, is governed by so many contingencies, that it cannot be kept in any fixed state, nor settled upon any stable foundation. Who then can be certain of the durability of his possessions and enjoyments? What human eye can foresee events purely contingent.

There is the merchant. Take the one that is most prosperous and fortunate. Is he free from anxiety? Can he be so with his many heavy speculations, and his numerous ships floating about all the seas in the world, freighted with massy wealth? A storm may arise on a sudden and overwhelm his vessel, whau his valuable cargo must become a prey to the devouring sea.

There is the tradesman. He may be most frugal. Yet in a few hours he may lose his whole substance; in one night it may be consumed by a merciless fire.

There is the gay man—the riotous liver, surfeited on plenty. Who can say that the day may not come when he may be brought to ask for a morsel of aims to keep him from starving?

Crowns themselves are tottering things. Princes, when least dreaming of it, have been forced to quit

their palaces and lodge in prisons, or wander about the world, spectacles of entertainment to their enemies.

Here then are various occurrences and events, the direction of which is beyond the reach of human power, and which, if foreseen, human prudence could not have averted. How wise then was it of Solomon to observe:

"The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong; nor yet bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

FACETIE.

AN industrious wife is making a straw hat for her husband out of a straw used by him in his cherry-cobblers last summer.

A JUDGE has decided that if a woman will chafe pie-crust with butter at thirty-eight pence a pound, her husband has a good cause for divorce.

A YOUNG lady asking a young man in a music hall, "Have you happy dreams?" was astonished when he replied, "No, ma'am, I'm mostly troubled with the nightmares."

WHEN Adam got tired of naming his descendants, and when he got half, through he said, "let's quit and call the rest Smith."

A QUAKER having sold a fine-looking but blind horse, asked the purchaser, "Well, my friend, don't you see any fault in him?" "No," was the answer. "Neither will he see any fault in them."

A PROFESSIONAL lady has been autographing the good people of the some seaside place by her splendid swimming and wonderful feats in diving. We presume that her costume is that of Lady Godiva.

BARNUM has just engaged a German giant of such size that his barber shaves him with a scythe. His nose is so commodious that if a lantern was placed therein it might be used as a light house.

A GENTLEMAN seeing a pretty maid with his wife's bonnet on, kissed her, supposing her to be the real owner. He soon discovered his error through the assistance of his affectionate wife.

"PA, do storms ever make malt liquors?" "No, child; why did you ask?" "Because I heard ma tell Jane to bring in the clothes, for a storm was brewing."

The proprietor of a young ladies' academy has utterly ruined his business by causing to be inserted in a large number of papers a picture of the building, with two girls standing on the balcony, with last year's hats on their heads.

A DROLL story is told this week of two infants terrible in the nursery:—"Why do we pray for our daily bread for this day?" "Why should we not pray for it once a week?" "Because mamma always likes hot rolls for breakfast."

A REPORTER has been nearly kissed to death. He entered the wrong apartment to seek particulars of a murder, and was welcomed by an old couple as their expected son, after an absence of twenty years.

AN ART SCHOLAR.

TEACHER (to a little boy): "Well, my boy, do you know your tables?"

PUPIL: "Yes, ma'am; breakfast table, dinner table, and supper table."

The boy goes to the head of the holiday class.

A FATHER, in consoling his daughter who had lost her husband, said: "I don't wonder you grieve for him, my child; you will never find his equal." "I don't know as I can," responded the sobbing widow, "but I'll do my best." The father felt comforted.

A FINAL CASE.

CUSTOMER (who wishes to return a horse he has lately bought): "He's kicked the carriage into Lucifer matches, and no one dares get on his back. What he was made for I can't possibly think."

DEALER: "To sell, I should say."

A PA who was looking at a house the other day, said he couldn't afford to pay so much rent. "Well, consider the neighbourhood," replied the woman in charge. "You can borrow flat-irons next door, coffee and tea across the street, flour and sugar on the corner, and there's a big pile of wood belonging to the school-house right across the alley."

TOLD 'EM SO.

JUSTICE (to prisoner): "What were you doing in that neighbourhood, sir?"

PRISONER: "Wasn't doing nothing, sir; I only went to sleep in a fellow's lodgings."

JUSTICE: "Well, sir, the police of that district should have arrested you as a vagrant."

PRISONER: "That's exactly what I told them two or three times."

LORD ELLERBOROUGH was once strangely posed by a witness, a labouring bricklayer, who came to be sworn. "Really, witness," said the Lord Chief

Justice, "when you have to appear before the court it is your bounden duty to be more clean and decent in your appearance." "Upon my life," said the witness, "if your lordship comes to that I'm every bit as well dressed as your lordship." "How do you mean?" said his lordship, angrily. "Why, faith," said the labourer, "you've some here in your working-clothes, and I'm come in mine."

A few days since, two girls, one grinding an organ and the other beating a tambourine, were performing in front of one of the hotels. After the "tune was out," the tambourine girl stepped up to a "grozny" and held out the tambourine for him to drop in some of his pennies; but he, thinking she wanted to make him a present of it, very innocently said: "I don't care anything about that—I can't play."

NEW TRADE.

BOB (log.): "What's up?"
TOM: "Why, I'm getting up my face for my daguerrotype?"
BOB: "Won't pass current for that?"
TOM: "Why?"
BOB: "Too much brass in it!"
TOM: "Well, it'll go for a counterfeit presentment, then."

Or the humours of Infancy there is no end. A French newspaper gives us now a story of an infant, aged four, whose mamma thought it right to refuse the child something upon which his heart was desperately set. Finding that there was no hope for him, the youngster burst into a passion of tears and exclaimed, "Well, then, what did they bore me for?"

MAKE HAY WHILE THE SUN SHINES.

"Jack," said a coal merchant, "what kind of a morning is it?"
"Very cold, sir!"
"Did it freeze?"
"Yes sir; hard!"
"Raise the coals four shillings a ton."

We never much admire the churchwarden's wife who went to church for the first time in her life when her husband was churchwarden, and, being somewhat late, the congregation were getting up from their knees at the time she entered; and she said, with a sweet, condescending smile, "Pray keep your seats, ladies and gentlemen, I think no more of myself than I did before."

TAKING HIS MEASURE.

Mrs. HITEM (on sofa): "Sit down, Mr. Ell Flemish, sit down here by me."

Mr. ELL FLEMISH (ill-naturedly): "How can I sit anywhere near you, madam, as long as you follow the ridiculous fashion in dress?"

Mrs. HITEM (indignantly): "I should think the ninth part of a man could find room anywhere!"

NOTHING LIKE PRUDENCE.

MARIA (loquuting): "My dear Charles, before we think of marrying, I must ask you what you have?"

CHARLES: "My dear Maria, I will tell you frankly that all I have in the world is a drum and a cricket-bat; but papa has promised me a bow and arrows and a pony, if I am a good boy."

MARIA: "Oh! my dear Charles, we could never live and keep house upon that!"

THE MARKET REPORT.—The happy dénouement of the harvest question has set everything up. The funds are in capital condition, the thermometer is high, the moon has risen, and snubs have an upward tendency. Penny loaves are in great demand, and the St. Leger prices are frequently quoted. Several new companies have been floated at the sea-side, and there is a demand for money at all fashionable watering-places. Good paper is eagerly sought, and the "London Reader" is at a premium. The rate of discount remains unchanged, and so do several cheques drawn by Alexander Collicie.

"DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND."

Krouser and Van Tagen were two respectable citizens of Amsterdam, the former having a marriageable daughter, and the latter a son who had an ardent wish to be her husband. But old Krouser said the son of his friend was not rich enough to enter his family, and old Van Tagen was mad when the report was brought him by an officious friend.

"Save me from Butzon!" he exclaimed, "if I do not steal a march on my old friend Krouser."

He concealed his wrath, and went and called on Krouser, whom he engaged to furnish within thirty days one million Zuyder Zee herrings. He went and bought all the herrings the city and suburbs contained, and twenty days thereafter he received a letter from Krouser, who was in the wildest despair, announcing that he never should be able to keep his agreement, as he could not find a herring for sale, and offered fifty thousand guilders to be released from his contract.

"I have him!" said Van Tagen, and he wrote his acceptance of his offer.

A few days after, Van Tagen was in greater

despair than even Krouser had ever been. He couldn't obtain a single barrel in which to pack his million of herrings. On making full investigation of his circumstances, he found that Krouser had purchased all the barrels, and realized that it was a case of "diamond cut diamond." He soon went to see his fellow merchant.

"You gave me fifty thousand guilders," he said, "to release you from that contract. I'll now give you back the fifty thousand guilders again, in the shape of an advance on your barrels, and we will call ourselves quits."

This was accordingly done, and the affair strengthened the admiration of the twain to such a point that they were both eager for the marriage of the young people, whose happiness ensured that of their parents.

TIT FOR TAT; OR, THE PAINTER AND HIS PATRON.

A PAINTER, who with envy saw
The praise which pictures often draw
For their antiquity alone
And not for merits of their own,
While modern art, though finely wrought,
By connoisseurs is little sought,
Determined, both for praise and pelf,
Thenceforth to paint "antiques" himself.
And soon it chanced a patron came,
A gentleman of wealth and fame
(And, as it seems, a man of wit),
Who for his portrait fain would sit.
So at his task the painter goes
With ready skill, till eyes and nose,
Mouth, forehead—every part in brief,
Stand forth, a face, in bold relief,
And, rarer still, a likeness too,
To every feature just and true.
The artist smiled and raised his head;
"My work is well advanced," he said,
"Naught but the drapery remains
To do. Henceforth I spare your pains
Of sitting—come another day!"
And so the patron went his way.
Meanwhile the painter piles his hand
On ancient collar, ruff and band,
Velasquez-like, that all may bear
The look antiquity should wear.
Till soon our gentleman is shown,
Not in apparel like his own,
But like some nobleman or sage
In garments of a former age!
And now before his patron aye
The painter waiting for his fee,
Which soon is counted in his hand
In rusty coins of every land;
In iron, copper, silver, gold,
The newest several centuries old
(A curious numismatic board
Which some ancestral hand had stored,
And which within their mouldy chest
Till now none ventured to molest).
Astounded at the strange display
And doubting what to think or say,
"Sir!" gasped the painter, "if you please,
I'd like to know what things are these?
Old models, as they seem to me;
In what, sir, may their value be?"
"In their antiquity," of course.
I prize them just in your purse."

The patron answered, with a smile,
"I would take, I own, a pretty pile
To make a pound; but then reflect,
What else, my friend, could you expect?
Just think a little and you'll see
I've paid you as you've painted me!
Take off that collar, and instead
Let a cravat support the head,
For that slashed doublet let me wear
A modern coat—and you may swear
When you have shown me as I am,
Quite free from any trick or sham,
As any gentleman should be,
In current coin I'll pay your fee!"

MORAL.

Painters and poets who discard
True art for false herein may learn—
(If praise or pay they most regard)
The genuine yields the best return.

H. A. J.

A LETTER respecting the lease of the foreshore opposite White Rock, Hastings, for the purpose of erecting an aquarium, has been received from the Treasury. Its purport is not so satisfactory as the council wish and a deputation has been appointed to wait on some of "My lords," to enter into verbal explanation on the subject.

A SPECTACULAR fish of the parachute species was caught in Newhaven harbour last week by Mr.

J. Eager, Landlord of the "Hope Inn," at the sea-side, and conveyed by him to the Aquarium at Brighton. A more splendid specimen has not been seen there. In shape it resembles a parachute, beautifully marked with hundreds of tentacles continually in motion. The same person took to the Aquarium on last Saturday week a fine octopus.

GEMS.

WHEN the lofty palm tree of Zeilan puts forth its flower, the sheath bursts with a report that shakes the forest; but thousands of other flowers of equal value open in the morning, and the very dew-drops bear no sounds. Even so, many souls do blossom in mercy, and the world hears neither whirlwind nor tempest.

THE great foe of life is indulgence under one form or another. The letting down of the standard endangers the length of the course. To be safe one must be circumspect, prudent, rational, clear in judgment, firm in self-control. To the command over his appetite a man will owe length of days only, not mere continuity, but that which gives to continuity which makes prolonged existence something worthy of being called a "lease of life," and not a stretch of drowsy stupor. As vitality comes to the system, it beats off its foes, and conquers one after another the advancing years.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

THE white of an egg has proved of late the most efficacious remedy for burns. Seven or eight successive applications of this substance soothe the pain, and effectually exclude the burn from air. This simple remedy seems to be preferable to collodion or even cotton. Extraordinary stories are told of the healing properties of a new oil, which is easily made from the hens' eggs. The eggs are first boiled hard and the yolks are then removed, crushed and placed over a fire, where they are carefully stirred until the whole substance is just on the point of catching fire, when the oil separates and may be poured off. One yolk will yield nearly two teaspoonfuls of oil. It is in general use among the colonists of South Russia as a means of curing cuts, bruises and scratches.

COMMON washerwomen spoil everything with soda, and nothing is more frequent than to see the delicate tints of lawns and percales turned into dark blotches and muddy streaks by the ignorance of a laundress. It is worth while for ladies to pay attention to this, and insist upon having their summer dresses washed according to the directions which they should be prepared to give their laundresses themselves. In the first place the water should be tepid, the soap should not be allowed to touch the fabric; it should be washed and rinsed quick, turned upon the wrong side, and hung in the shade to dry, and when starched (in thin boiled but not boiling starch) should be folded in sheets or towels, and ironed on the wrong side as soon as possible.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A LADY in Paris is introducing a new fashion in regard to furniture. She is having all her chairs, sofas, and even her carriages, stuffed with aromatic herbs, which fill the air with an agreeable but not too powerful perfume. The fashion is derived from the Eastern nations, and prevails extensively over a considerable part of Asia.

MR. LLOYD, of London, has been exhibiting his life-saving apparatus at Douglas, Isle of Man. He went in a yacht some distance out to sea, and he and several young gentlemen belonging to the town disported themselves in the water with perfect safety, each on one of his buoyant apparatus. A large number of persons accompanied Mr. Lloyd and party in yachts, and witnessed his successful performances with great pleasure.

THE manufacture of alligator leather has now become an important branch of industry. The skins come chiefly from Florida and Louisiana, and the hunting and skinning of the animals are extensively pursued. About 20,000 skins are tanned every year. They are manufactured in the United States, and exported to England and France. The French, owing to their superior method of tanning, are formidable competitors.

THE chemiloon is an invention for the seaside. To explain it lengthily, we suppose it is a sort of sacque extending from the neck to the ankles, properly belted and with some buttons and things, and it seems that it must be a nice thing. It saves time, for no woman need be an hour and a half dressing in a chemiloon—with the outside ornaments, of course, and it seems quite popular already at the seaside.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LEICESTER DODSON.—Blue-eyed Nellie must have accepted some other offer.

A. B. C.—The proper method is to advertise for the situation you require, when you will be able to get a more varied chance.

CHARLIE.—A ring presented to a lady by a gentleman as a token of an engagement to wed should be worn by her in the same position as a wedding ring.

SKINS.—Both candidates for matrimony must reside within the boundary of the parish church or Registrar's office for three weeks prior to the ceremony taking place.

CHARLIE.—Perhaps if you should discontinue your visits for awhile, the young lady would learn to set so high a value upon your company that she would be anxious to secure it for life.

MEDICUS.—Professor Lister, of Edinburgh, states that he has carefully tested the respective merits of salicylic acid and carbolic acid for use in antiseptic surgery, and is satisfied that preference ought to be given to carbolic acid.

JESSE.—Olay your parents and stick to your books. If the fascinating widow really loves you she will wait, at least till you become of age. It would be folly for you to marry now, and expect to go through college afterwards.

FRED.—We would not advise an elopement under any circumstances. You can wait till the young lady becomes of age and then she can marry you openly. If your love for each other is of the true kind it will grow better for waiting, and so will you.

A PATRICK.—The difficulty of cleaning plaster of Paris cannot be without injury to well known. The government of Prussia has offered a prize of nearly eight hundred dollars in gold for a method of treatment which shall render frequent washing harmless to the colour or form of such cast.

ABANDON.—1. A frequent application of lunar caustic is the surest method. 2. The rule is laid down by every railway company as to the conveyance of dogs, and no person has any right to deviate from it. If by accident such an error did occur an apology ought to have been tendered and accepted.

TOM.—The passions are at once tempters and chastisers. As tempters, they come with garlands of flowers on the brows of youth; as chastisers, they appear with wreaths of snakes on the forehead of deformity. They are angels of light in their delusion; they are fiends of torment in their inductions.

QUEEN.—Respect the man who knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of the mischief of the world comes from the fact that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower, and spend no more labour on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut.

MESMER.—Profanity never did any man the least good. No man is the richer, or happier, or wiser for it. It commands no one to any society. It is disgusting to the refined; abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; degrading to the mind; unprofitable, needless, and injurious to society.

D. D.—We do not see that you can do anything but continue to say No. As years roll on, and you grow more and more aged, perhaps your monosyllabic negative will begin to carry a weight and conviction with it which will ultimately free you from further annoyance of the kind you describe.

A. A. A.—You are not obliged to discuss your business or affairs with every one you may chance to know; but in dealing with a confidential friend be perfectly frank. Disclose the real motives of your conduct, then those who differ from you may still respect you. Nothing is more fatal to a friendship than prevarication and deceit.

C. W.—Feeling maketh a lively man, thought maketh a strong man, action maketh a useful man—and all these together make a perfect man. Now abide these three: Feeling, thought, action, and the greatest of these is action; but neither can abide without the others. Some men think much, feel little, and act less. They are universally unsafe and unlovely men.

A CONSTANT READER.—The nearest approach to the roc, that famous bird of Arabian mythology, which was gigantic enough to devour elephants, has been discovered in New Zealand. At Glenmark, in Otago, Dr. Haast has found the fossil bones of an immense bird, called by him *hagoriphi*, which he supposes was in the habit of preying upon the moa, itself a bird ten feet high.

CLARA.—It would be unjust to your lover to marry him while you are feeling as you describe, and such a marriage would probably end in making you both

misery. Your best way would be to tell him frankly and affectionately just how you feel, and if he is not willing to improve his manners then it might be advisable for you to break off the engagement. A woman could not be happy with a husband of whom she is herself ashamed, and that all her relatives despise.

S. S.—Why will not mothers know that to invite and possess the confidence of their daughters is to secure them from evil? Never make them afraid to tell you anything, never make them ashamed of the natural desire to have attention from the other sex. Admit the liking for it as belonging to youth—to your past youth—but at the same time enforce the judicious timing of it, and above all encourage a frank avowal of sympathy with their youthful preferences. Many a young girl, now lost to herself and to society, might have been saved by such a course.

NAB.—The progress of storms has been defined to be the extension of the fall of the barometer in a particular direction. Mr. Robert Tennant read a paper on the subject before the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in which he expressed the opinion that storms begin at a height of from five to six miles above the surface of the earth. The upper current of air moves faster than the lower, which is retarded by friction with the surface, and this comparatively rapid movement of the higher atmosphere in the direction of the storm-motion causes the fall of the barometer which is so important an element in forecasting the weather.

CLARA.—A little thoughtful attention how happy it makes the old! They have outlived most of the friends of their early youth. How lonely their hours! Often their partners in life have long filled silent graves; often their children they have followed to the tomb. They stand solitary, bending on their staff, waiting till the same call shall reach them. How often they must think of absent lamented faces, of the love which cherished them, and the tears of sympathy which fell with theirs, now all gone. Why should not the young cling round and comfort them, cheering their gloom with happy smiles?

HOPE AND FEARS.

Of what is the young girl thinking,
As she gazes with wistful eyes,
On that fair and smiling landscape,
Those calm and cloudless skies?

She thinks of her first fond lover,
Dearer than aught beside;
She remembers the songs of the rovers
With tenderness and pride.

She recalls their sorrowful parting,
How like a dream it appears,
And her heart grows heavy and sad
With a woman's unspoken fears.

She retraces each well known spot
Where love's bright moments flew,
And a little word of tender memories
Still keeps her warm heart true.

And many a whispered prayer
Is wafted along the breeze,
For the loved, the absent one,
Severed by land and seas.

And she pictures a blissful future,
Calm, happy days in store,
When the absent shall return
To leave her side no more.

S. A.

LILY AND AUNT wishes to correspond with two young men.

NAPOLEONE, twenty-five, well educated, medium height and fair complexion, wishes to correspond with a gentleman from twenty-three to thirty.

GRACE, eighteen, dark, wishes to correspond with a fair gentleman; must be well connected and educated and of a lively disposition.

F. C., twenty-one, dark, 5ft. 6in., fair complexion, a shorthand writer by profession, would like to correspond with a respectable young lady in London.

HARRY, nineteen, tall, dark, very cheerful and loving disposition, domesticated and fond of music, would like to correspond with a gentleman in a good position and affectionate.

RAILWAY CLERK, nineteen, with rather low salary, medium height, slender and dark, fond of home and music, would like to correspond with a young lady about seventeen, who must be loving and fond of home and would make a careful wife.

LOVELY FAIR, fair and graceful, very dark gray eyes, golden hair, fond of children and domesticated, youngest daughter of a woollen merchant, would like to correspond with a tall, dark, handsome young gentleman with black eyes; an over-seer preferred.

FAIRY QUEEN wishes to correspond with a young man; she is nineteen, medium height, brown hair, gray eyes, moderately good looking, a pretty good vocalist and pianist and would make a loving wife; respondent must be about twenty-five, good tempered and fond of home, an actor with a good income preferred.

NELLY BAY, nineteen, medium height, fair complexion considered good looking, affectionate, domesticated, and fond of home, would like to correspond with a kind hearted gentleman with a view to matrimony; he must be tall and good looking, and have an income not less than 150*l.* per annum.

D. T. A. would like to correspond with a middle-aged gentleman with a view to matrimony; a widower preferred. D. T. A. is well educated, accustomed to good society, amiable, musical, fond of home, but very lonely, and would strive to make a comfortable home for a husband.

EMMIE, twenty-six, rather short, very slight figure, brown hair, gray eyes, considered good looking and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to marriage, about twenty-eight, of medium height, dark hair and eyes, good tempered and fond of home; a mechanic preferred.

FANNY AND FLORENCE, two friends, wish to correspond with two young mechanics with a view to matrimony; they are of a loving disposition and thoroughly domesticated and are considered good looking by their friends.

and rather dark complexion. Florence is eighteen, fair complexion, dark brown hair and eyes. They think they would make good wives to loving husbands not over twenty-four.

MARIAN D., considered good looking, with blue eyes and brown hair, thoroughly domesticated, would like to correspond with a gentleman with a view to matrimony; he must be 5ft. 7in., which will be two inches taller than herself, a cattle dealer preferred.

MARGUERITE AND CLARICE, both brunettes, wish to correspond with two fair gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Marguerite is twenty-two, medium height; Clarice is nineteen and tall. Both are considered good looking, fond of music and thoroughly domesticated and would make loving wives.

COLLEEN BAWN and **CINDERELLA**, two companions, wish to correspond with two young men of loving dispositions. Colleen Bawn is tall, fair, and not pretty, but is loving, docile, and could make a home happy. Cinderella is of medium height, has dark brown hair and eyes, is good tempered and would make a loving wife. Both are Dublin girls; tradesmen preferred.

SARAH and **MARY**, two friends, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony; they must be tall, dark and of good family and not under twenty. Sarah is dark, with brown eyes; Mary is dark, with blue eyes. Both considered nice looking, are in their nineteenth year, domesticated and of a loving disposition.

ANNIE, twenty-two, ladylike in appearance, very intelligent and with a good English education, would like to correspond with a young gentleman; she is both affectionate and good tempered and would do all in her power to make his home happy; she is rather below the medium height, with ashen hair and dark eyes and very musical.

SUNSHINE and **SNOWDROP**, sisters, would like to correspond with two dark young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Sunshine is eighteen, tall, dark, with dark hair and eyes. Snowdrop is seventeen, tall, fair, with blue eyes and light hair; both considered good looking. Respondents must be about twenty, tall and good looking, fond of home and children; middlemen preferred. **EMMA** and **GERTRUDE**, sisters, would like to correspond with two brothers or friends; they must be gentlemen about twenty-three, tall and good-looking. Eliza is eighteen, medium height, has brown hair and dark gray eyes; Gertrude is twenty, medium height, has rather fair hair and blue eyes, and they are both of loving dispositions, very good tempered, and are considered handsome.

NINA and **LOU**, sisters, wish to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Nina is eighteen, tall, fair, dark eyes and light hair. Lou is seventeen, tall, dark, dark hair and eyes; both considered good looking, are accomplished and domesticated. Respondents must be about twenty-two, tall, dark and good looking, fond of home and children and possess an income of not less than 300*l.* a year.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED.

ELLA and **CHRISTINE** are responded to by—**PASSMORE** and **FRANK**.

THOMAS E. B.—Mabel, who thinks she is all that he requires.

LIZIE by—**W. A. B.**, twenty-two, dark, medium height, income 60*l.*, without business.

LOVELY TAY by—**LOVELY NELL**, twenty-three, dark complexion, and would make a comfortable home.

GREAT QUEEN by—**PATRICK O'S.**, an Irish gentleman, he thinks she is all he can desire.

ANNE by—**BOWLINE BRIDLE**, 5ft. 7in., thinks she is all he requires.

LOVELY by—**DANCE DOMMUN**, who believes he answers to Leoline's description of a gentleman.

JOHN S. B.—**FANNY**, nineteen, medium height and good looking.

LILLY by—**HARRY**, twenty-five, dark hair and brown eyes, domesticated, fond of home and children, thinks he would suit Lilly.

J. V. B.—**ROSE W.**, twenty, medium height; and by—**MAGGIE**, twenty, medium height, good tempered, loving and domesticated.

LOVELY ALICE by—**C. K.**, a sergeant, Royal Artillery, tall, dark, and would make a good and lovable husband.

E. J. E. B.—**HELEN L.**, a young lady of especial good qualities, a blonde, medium height, very affectionate, and considered by her friend passable in looks.

HONOR E. B.—**CHRISTINE**, twenty, 5ft. 3in., large gray eyes, chestnut hair, fresh complexion, rather plain looking, a good pianist and vocalist and has a great desire to become a member of Horace's profession; thinks she would just suit him.

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